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In the absence of dietary surveillance, chitosan does not reduce plasma lipids or obesity in hypercholesterolaemic obese Asian subjects.**Ho SC, Tai ES, Eng PH, Tan CE, Fok AC.**

Department of Endocrinology, Singapore General Hospital, Singapore.

OBJECTIVE: To investigate the effects of Absorbitol on body weight, anthropometry, body composition, blood pressures and lipid profiles in obese, hypercholesterolaemic subjects without dietary restriction. **DESIGN:** A randomised, double blind. Placebo-controlled study. **SUBJECTS:** Normal volunteers with no history of chronic illnesses (n=88) who were obese (body fat percentage > 20% in males and > 30% in females) and hypercholesterolaemic (total cholesterol > 5.20 mmol/L). Sixty-eight (72.3%) subjects completed the study. **INTERVENTION:** After a 4 week run in phase, 4 placebo/Absorbitol (250 mg) capsules were prescribed 3 times a day before meals. Subjects received written information on healthy lifestyle but there was no dietary restriction or monitoring. **MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES:** Weight, body mass index, lean body mass, waist, hip, blood pressure, fasting lipids and insulin levels were taken at baseline, 4th and 16th week of the study. **STATISTICAL ANALYSIS PERFORMED:** Analyses were on an intention-to-treat basis. Comparisons between groups were made using Student's t and Mann-Whitney tests for parametric and non-parametric data respectively. **RESULTS:** There was no significant change in the measured parameters in Absorbitol treated subjects compared to those on placebo, with exception of HDL-cholesterol which increased in the absorbitol group and decreased in the placebo group (p=0.048). The side effects of Absorbitol were also comparable to that of placebo. **CONCLUSIONS:** In the absence of dietary surveillance, Absorbitol does not bring about improvement in weight, anthropometry, body composition, blood pressure or lipid profile.

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