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A STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE REGARDING HEALTH HAZARDS OF FAST FOODS AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS OF GREATER NOIDA, UP

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Abstract

Food habits and patterns are formed during childhood and will remain till the end of individual's life. Proper nutrition in this age causes child growth and development and also reduces the risk of chronic diseases in adulthood. School-age children often face health related nutritional problems, when they enter the school environment there will be changes in their habits, lifestyle and particularly in their food habits. Moreover, the growth rate and health are closely interrelated with quality and quantity of foods and the information related to health status and nutrition status of this group is an important health issue in terms of prevalence of underweight and overweight¹. The main **Objectives** of the study are: (1) To assess the level of knowledge regarding health hazards of fast foods among adolescents. (2) To assess the attitude regarding health hazards of fast foods among adolescents **Methods:** A Non-experimental quantitative research approach and descriptive research design was adopted for the present research study. Convenient random sampling technique was used to collect the data. Tool used for present study were socio-demographic sheet, Semi structured questionnaires tool and Likert scale was used to collect data. The population for this study were all comprised of adolescents who are 10-19 years. (Accessible population-) It included adolescents of age 10-19 years in selected school of Greater Noida, District Gautam Buddh Nagar. The sample size for present study was 100. **Results** of the study reveals that maximum adolescents 56 (56%) were having the age of 17-19 years and minimum were 13(13%) were having 11-13 years. Mostly 57(57%) adolescents were male and 43(43%) were female. Majority of adolescent 60 (60%) were from rural areas and 40(40%) were from urban area. Regarding the father's employment status majority 45(45%) were self-employee and minimum were 9(9%) were unemployed. Regarding the mother's employment status majority 59 (59%) were unemployed and minimum were 10(10%) were private employee. Highest 39(39%) family income per month was more than or equal to 20,000 and lowest 14(14%) were having 5000-9999 income per month. Maximum 65(65%) were vegetarian and minimum 1(1%) were vegan.

Keywords: Junk Food, Fast Food, Hazards, Adolescents.

Introduction

Lifestyle is considered to be an important determinant of health and sickness. It has also a great role in growth and development of children. Some of the health problems are rooted in childhood habits and lifestyle. Among them obesity is a major problem. Obesity is one of the major health issues of modern civilization. It has been observed that the health problems of adult obesity can be prevented if obesity is controlled in childhood itself²

It's the 21st century and "junk food" has gone global. For worse junk food is now available all over the world. We see it all most everywhere we go in groceryshop and also in convenience stores. Children find themselves amidst of a complex society that is undergoing breathtaking changes. Concepts, relationships, lifestyles are metamorphasised to accommodate the new jet-setting age. Food is of no exception; Healthy nutritious foods have been replaced by the new food mantra - JUNK FOOD! Junk food comprises of anything that is quick, tasty, convenient and fashionable. It seems to have engulfed every age, every race and the newest entrants in children³.

Food is an important part of a balanced diet. It is something everyone needs, every day. Life can be sustained only with adequate nourishment. Man needs food for growth, development and to lead an active and healthy life. Food is a substance, usually composed of carbohydrates, fats, proteins and water that can be eaten or drunk by an animal or human for nutrition or pleasure. Healthy nutritious foods have been replaced by the new food mantra – JUNK FOOD or fast food! Junk food is the term given to food that is high in calories but low in nutritional content. In the context of world economy, junk food is a global phenomenon. The availability of junk food and snacks at low prices and marketing strategies adapted by manufacturers of such foods has triggered an evolution wherein, consumption of foods that require neither the structure nor the preparation of a formal meal. It seems to have engulfed every age; every race and the newest entrants on stage are children, school going in particular. In adolescents both boys and girls undergo several physical and psychological changes which make them to become partly responsible for their own health and welfare. Junk foods have no or very less nutritional value and irrespective of the way they are marketed, they are not healthy to consume.⁴



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Consumption of fast foods has become almost a global phenomenon. India's fast-food industry is expanding at the rate of 40% every year. India ranks 10th in the fast-food per capita spending figures with 2.1% of expenditure in annual total spending. Popularity of these food stuffs in this age of urbanization has been attributed to quick preparation and convenience of finishing a meal within no time. Great taste, attractive appearance along with advertising has played a major role in attracting people particularly adolescents to the selling joints. Foods commonly considered fast foods include salted snack foods, gum, candy, sweet desserts, fried fast food, and sugary carbonated beverages, soft drinks, chips, wafers, noodles, pizza, burgers, French fries etc. are few examples from the vast variety of fast food available in the market. Ramchandra U Salunkhe AH, Mohite V. R. conducted a Study to assess the existing knowledge of adolescents regarding the health hazards of junk foods in a selected college and to find out association between selected demographical variables and health hazards of junk foods. Majority of study subjects 69.56% samples had average knowledge while 24.35% samples having good knowledge & 6.08 % samples having Poor knowledge regarding the health hazards of junk foods. There is a significant association between expense of junk food.⁵

Need of study

School-age children often face health related nutritional problems, when they enter the school environment there will be changes in their habits, lifestyle and particularly in their food habits. Moreover, the growth rate and health are closely interrelated with quality and quantity of foods and the information related to health status and nutrition status of this group is an important health issue in terms of prevalence of underweight and overweight. Nowadays, consumption of fast foods as snacks is increasing especially among primary school students. Change of food consumption pattern during few recent decades caused replacement of valueless foods with nutritious snacks. Increasing trend of urban life, extensive T V advertising, attractive packaging and lack of nutritional knowledge and awareness by parents are the major causes of fast-food consumption.⁶ Childhood obesity is the result of an imbalance between the calories a child consumes as food and beverages and the calories a child uses to support normal growth and development, metabolism and physical activity. In other words, obesity results when a child consumes more calories than the child uses.²⁹ Children who don't exercise much are more likely to gain weight because they don't burn as many calories. Too much time spent in sedentary activities, such as watching television or playing video games, also contribute to the problem. The investigator felt that children do not have adequate knowledge about the health hazards of fast foods. Children are more vulnerable to become addicted to fast foods without knowing the health hazards of fast food. So, the investigator decided to create awareness among the school children about the health hazards of fast foods.⁷

Review of literature

1- **Upendra Kumar Singh, etal(2020)** conducted a study to assess the effectiveness of an educational intervention program (interactive lecture) based on the theory of planned behavior (TPB) for reducing junk food consumption among school adolescents in Birgunj Metropolitan City, Nepal. A structured questionnaire was deployed for collecting the data from four government schools. Pretest and Posttest group study design and simple random sampling techniques were used. The theory of planned behavior indicates that behavioral intention of junk food consumption was different in pretest and posttest [5.43 ± 1.3 and 7.96 ± 0.3]. Furthermore, the average score of attitudes toward junk food consumption was 11.9 ± 1.5 and 16.3 ± 1.6 . Meanwhile, perceived behavior control (PBC) toward junk food was also different after intervention [2.42 ± 0.50 and 3.13 ± 0.58]. The interactive lecture method was proved an effective education program for changing the intentions of adolescent students and preventing them from consuming junk food which were statistically significant (<0.05). The study concluded that the intervention program has positive influence on the perceived behavior without control group of school-going adolescents.⁸

2. **Fareha Hamd Younis, etal (2019)** conducted a descriptive cross-sectional study to find out about the fast-food consumption of adolescent in age between 13-25 years old in Derna city and their effect on health. The sample of this research included 100 adolescents from both sexes. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: first part related to socio-demographic information and part two related to junk food pattern and influencing factors of junk food consumption and their effect on health. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 24. The findings revealed that more girls (67.0%) consumed fast food than boys and approximately half (49.0%) of Participants were consumed fast food as an alternative to main meal and more than half of participants (63.0%) were consuming soft drink every day, furthermore greater proportion of participants (42.0%) had urinary tract infection and that may relate to chips and soft drink were the most attractive food items among Participants. The study conducted adolescent consumed a greater amount of junk food which led to a majority of ill effects later on. It is recommended that the schools and community conduct and implement awareness programmers on fast food consumption and its ill effects.⁹

Material and Methods

Descriptive research design was adopted for the present study to assess the knowledge and attitude regarding health hazards of fast foods among adolescents. convenient random sampling technique was used to collect data. The population for this study were



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all comprised of adolescents who are 10-19 years. (Accessible population-) It included adolescents of age 10-19 years in selected school of Greater Noida, District Gautam Buddh Nagar. The sample size for present study was 100.

Selection & Development of Tool

The tool was developed by the investigator after the extensive review of literature on relevant topic and after discussion with experts and guide. In this study following tools were used:

Part I: Demographic Performa.

Part II: Semi structured questionnaire used to assess the knowledge and likert scale used to assess the attitude regarding health hazards of fast foods among adolescents.

Description of Tool

Part I

Demographic Performa: It consisted of 14 items related to socio-demographic data such as age, gender, habitat, religion, education status of father, education status of mother, Occupation of father, Occupation of mother, type of family, dietary habits, family income per month, Pocket money per month, Source of information about health hazardous of fast food, BMI.

Part II

1.Semi structured questionnaires tool: It consisted of total 20 questions which are related to assess the knowledge regarding health hazards of fast foods

2. Likert scale used to assess the attitude regarding health hazards of fast foods.

3.8 Validity of the Tool

The research tool was consulted with 7 experts from the field of nursing. Necessary changes were made, keeping in mind the suggestions from expert consulted and discussion with guide & coguide

Ethical considerations

1. Permission was obtained from the concerned authority of the adolescent students of Navrang Public School, Kulesara, Greater Noida, U.P.
2. Written informed consent was taken from the subjects who were participating in this study.

Results and Interpretation: The results are organized accordance to the objectives of the study below:

Table -1 Frequency and percentage distribution of subjects as per socio demographic variables
(N=100)

S.NO	CHARACTERISC	CATEGORY	RESPODENTS	
			FREQUENCY	%
1	Age	11-13 yrs	13	19%
		14-16 yrs	31	31%
		17-19yrs	56	56%
2	Gender	Male	57	57%
		Female	43	43%
3	Habitat	Rural	60	60%
		Urban	40	40%
4	Religion	Hindu	96	96%
		Muslim	3	3%
		Christian	1	1%
		Sikh	0	0%
5	Education of father	No formal education	8	8%
		Primary school	23	23%



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		education		
		Secondary school education	24	24%
		Diploma	14	14%
		Graduate and above	31	31%
6	Education of mother	No formal education	20	20%
		Primary school education	33	33%
		Secondary school education	15	15%
		Diploma	8	8%
		Graduate and above	24	24%
7	Occupation of father	Govt employee	12	12%
		Private employee	34	34%
		Self employee	45	45%
		Unemployed	9	9%
8	Occupation of mother	Govt employee	11	11%
		Private employee	10	10%
		Self employee	20	20%
		Unemployed	59	59%
9	Type of family	Nuclear	54	54%
		Joint	43	43%
		Extended	65	65%
10	Dietary pattern	Vegetarian	34	34%
		Non-vegetarian	1	1%
		Vegan	1	1%
11	Family income per month	Rs 5000-9999	14	14%
		Rs10000-1499,9	28	28%
		Rs15000-1999,9	19	19%
		Rs 20,000and above	39	39%
12	Pocket money per month	Rs 500-999	66	66%
		Rs 1000-1499	8	8%
		Rs 1500-1999	7	7%
		Rs 2000 and above	19	19%
13	Source of information	Mass media	29	29%
		Family /friends	44	44%
		Health workers	19	19%
		No information	8	8%

Table 1. depicts the frequency and percentage distribution of study subjects as per socio demographic variables.

Table 2: Analysis of knowledge of adolescents regarding fast food (n=100)

Knowledge	Category	Range of score	Respondents	
			frequency	Percentage
Inadequate	<50% score	1-10	75	75%
Moderate	51-75%score	11-15	24	24%
Adequate	>75% score	16-20	1	1%
TOTAL			100	100%



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Table 2 depicts that knowledge regarding health hazards on fast food. 75 percent (75) of adolescent were having inadequate (< 50% Score) knowledge regarding health hazards on fast food, 24 percent (24) of adolescent were having moderate (51-75% Score) and 1 percent (1) of adolescent were having adequate (> 75 % Score) knowledge regarding health hazards on fast food.

TABLE 2.1: ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDE OF ADOSCLENTS REGARDING FAST FOOD (N=100)

Attitude level	Category	Range of score	Respondents' knowledge	
			Frequency	%
Unfavorable	<50%	1-20	0	0
Moderate	50-70%	21-45	12	12%
favourable	>70%	46-80	88	88%
Total			100	100%

Table 2 .1depicts that analysis of attitude of adosclents regarding fast food. 0 percent (0) of adolescent were having unfavorable (< 50% Score) attitude regarding health hazards on fast food, 12 percent (12) of adolescent were having moderate (21-45% Score) and 88percent (88%) of adolescent were having favorable (> 70 % Score) attitude regarding health hazards on fast food.

Discussion: The present study was conducted to assess the knowledge and attitude regarding health hazards of fast foods among adolescents The study was conducted on 100 study subjects' study in schools of greater Noida. The findings of the present study showed that the majority of subjects i.e., 75% subjects had Inadequate knowledge regarding hazards of fast food while 24% subjects reported with moderate knowledge regarding the hazards of fast food in adolescents. Similar findings were observed in the study conducted by. Pahari, etal(2020)to assess a cross sectional analytical study to unperception and identify factors influencing junk food consumption among school level children of Pokhara , Nepal . 220 students of 12 different private schools of Pokhara of grade 4-9 were selected. Systematic random sampling was done to select the required samples and the data was collected using self-administered questionnaire and personal interviews. Majority (81%) of the students considered junk food consumption to be unhealthy. About half of the students were unaware of the nutritive value, quality of the food, ingredients, preservatives used and negative consequences of junk foods. There is a significant difference between the grade of the students and the average frequency of junk food use per week. The average consumption of junk food increases as the grades of students increases. (Chi square =53.025, p ≤0.01). The results reveal that consumption of junk food was notably high due to various enabling factors such as addictive taste, changing lifestyle, propagandist advertising and instant availability. Grade and sex of the students were found to be significant predictors in over consuming junk¹⁰

In the present study attitude of adosclents regarding fast food. 0 percent (0) of adolescent were having unfavorable (< 50% Score) attitude regarding health hazards on fast food, 12 percent (12) of adolescent were having moderate (21-45% Score) and 88percent (88%) of adolescent were having favorable (> 70 % Score) attitude regarding health hazards on fast food. similar findings observed in study conducted by yaazhini, etal (2020) conducted study in Kanchipuram, Tamil Naidu to assess the knowledge on fast food eating among adolescents. The present study was conducted to assess the knowledge and attitude regarding health hazard of fast food among adolescent. Non experimental descriptive research design was used. The population of the study to assess the knowledge on fast food eating among adults. 25-50 year of age residing in selected community area, Kanchipuram district Tamil Nadu. The sample size used was 50 adults residing at karapakkam. Non randomized purposive sampling technique was used for the present study. The result shows 1(2%) of sample had inadequate knowledge, 18(36%) of sample has moderately adequate knowledge 31(62%) of sample had adequate knowledge regarding fast food eating.

Conclusion

The present study was undertaken assess the knowledge regarding fast food among adolescents and to assess the attitude regarding fast food among adolescent The result of the study reveals that maximum adolescents 56 (56%) were having the age of 17-19 years and minimum were 13(13%) were having 11-13 years. Mostly 57(57%) adolescents were male and 43(43%) were female. Majority of adolescent 60 (60%) were from rural areas and 40(40%) were from urban area. Regarding the father's employment status majority 45(45%) were self-employee and minimum were 9(9%) were unemployed. Regarding the mother's employment status majority 59 (59%) were unemployed and minimum were 10(10%) were private employee. Highest 39(39%) family income per month was more than or equal to 20,000 and lowest 14(14%) were having 5000-9999 income per month. Maximum 65(65%) were vegetarian and minimum 1(1%) were vegan.



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Implications

- Being overweight or obese can have a serious impact on health. Carrying extra fat leads to serious health consequences such as cardiovascular disease (mainly heart disease and stroke), type 2 diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders like osteoarthritis, and some cancers (endometrial, breast and colon).
- These conditions cause premature death and substantial disability.⁷ Obesity has become a topic of much concern and provides a rich data source about factors contributing to childhood obesity.

Nursing Practice

- There is need of health personnel to take active part in providing health education to the adolescents regarding the health hazards of fast food which help them to prevent further complications.
- Present study provides data regarding the knowledge and attitude of adolescent on health hazards of fast food.
- These findings can be helpful for practicing staff nurses while giving health education to adolescents regarding diet, lifestyle, importance of physical activities and also ways to eliminating factors that contribute to over consumption of fast food.

Nursing Education

- The nursing curriculum should put more emphasis on the improvement of the knowledge regarding the health hazards of fast food. The primary task is to help the nurse to master at basic level and evaluate the update content as an ongoing future.
- The result of the study enables the nurses to prepare themselves to give health education more effectively. The proper dissemination of information on health hazards of fast food is essential to help people to develop correct and healthy lifestyle.

Nursing Research

- Findings of the study will act as a catalyst to carry out more extensive research on a large population sample. Health hazards of fast food among adolescent is a very serious topic today, there is need for extended and intensive nursing research on this topic.
- Awareness about importance of conducting research in the area of health hazards of fast food can be created among nurses those who are working in community areas. It will help the future generation to become healthy.

Nursing administration

- Nursing personnel should be prepared by in service education programs to take leadership role in educating the community on health hazards of fast food.
- Administrative support should be provided to conduct in service education programme for staff nurses on the importance of adopting healthy lifestyle.
- Interventions to improve adherence can be done by giving pamphlets, booklets and health education campaign to be delivered through the medium of radio and television, posters to strengthen people perception about the benefits of adopting healthy lifestyle.

Recommendations

- Similar study can be conducted with large sample to generalize the findings.
- Study can be replicated with different population in different setting.
- Experimental studies can be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of either SIM or PTP on knowledge on fast food.
- A study can be conducted to assess the attitude of parents of the child on their fast-food consumption.

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