

An Empirical Study on Nutritional Awareness Among College Students

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Abstract: Food is very essential part of all human beings. Without food no living creature can survive on the face of this earth. So we human beings tend to eat whatever is easily available to us without thinking how nutritious the food is that we consume. We just tend to consume it blindly. There are few people who are very conscious about their health and may check for the nutrition value containing in the food before consuming it. But most of the people do not check or focus on the nutritional value they consume due to vast change in the living environment of people. This may be due to the cultural factors, life style, climatic conditions, eating habits etc. or they are not aware about nutritional value even though they are conscious about health. These factors may have a direct impact on people as they hardly concentrate on their health by always keeping themselves busy in their own working schedule. This avoidance regarding health is mostly seen in working women & men and also in college students as they make health secondary factor. The present study focuses on the college students where their nutrition awareness is evaluated. Student life style is changed completely as students are very much busy with their academics i.e. their projects, assignments, college work, co-curricular activities and various tasks. This paper analyzes the students' awareness in northern & southern part of India about their health and nutrition based on primary and secondary data.

Keywords: Nutrition, diet, and nourishment.

1. Introduction

Nutrition is nourishment or energy that is obtained from consuming proper dietary and nutritious food. As sustenance is very important, regardless of whether it is for taste or for nutritious esteem. The dietary estimation of nourishment is the esteem the sustenance provides for the body to work. To recognize whether nourishment has poor or great wholesome esteem, individuals utilize a sustenance realities graph. These outlines can show the measure of fat, sugar, calories, fiber, starches, cholesterol, calories, and all the more all of these substances fill some need when devoured into the body. Sugars, for instance, are separated in the body to give vitality to the body to perform responses and to recapture stamina. Protein causes muscles to recuperate more grounded than before and in addition encourage skin and hair cells to create. A few substances, for example, fat and sugar, can be misjudged as being hurtful to the body. Be that as it may, fats and sugars are indispensable to the human body and without them certain procedures inside the body couldn't happen. Inadequate nutrition affects students' health and academic success. Students may have proficient knowledge regarding nutritional

requirements; however, the transition to college life gives them more freedom to choose the type and the amount of food they eat. Most college campuses have dining facilities that provide a variety of food options, which can lead to establishing either good or bad eating behaviors. Individuals entering college are beginning to live independently. Students' physical activity and eating habits usually shape or change during these years. Establishing good eating habits during this time is critical, because these behaviors often continue through adulthood and can be very difficult to change once they are established.

2. Literature review

Amamoto and Andoyama, 2004-There have been considerable changes in human lifestyle all over the world in the recent decades. Especially in recent years, the lifestyle has rapidly been changed. These changes appeared in diet, types of food, cooking time, etc. Nowadays processed foods are rapidly replacing organic food. Another change is the rapid increase in the number of restaurants and in people's tendency to eat fast food. Proper nutrition is one of the most important aspects of lifestyle

Stampferetal, 2000 - Epidemiological evidence shows that there is an increased incidence of diseases such as (Cardiovascular diseases, obesity, high blood pressure and cancer), which can be attributed to changes in lifestyle as well as changes in nutritional habits. Nutritional education is also one of the important aspects that play a big role in nutritional knowledge by raising awareness and ultimately the health of the society

Kaur 2007 - The study conducted on impact of nutrition education on nutrient adequacy of 60 adolescent girls (13-19 years). Nutrition education for a period of 3 months was imparted to the subjects after assessing their basic nutrition knowledge. Nutrition education improved their mean nutrition knowledge scores significantly ($P \leq 0.01$) from 11.17 ± 1.42 to 19.16 ± 1.8 . The average contribution of carbohydrate, protein, fat, vitamin and minerals increased significantly after imparting nutrition education.

Ms. B. Thanuja 2007 - The study was conducted, on two hundred adolescent girls between sixteen to eighteen years. Their nutritional knowledge was assessed with the help of questionnaire. When compared with male, female were having greater responsibility in house hold duties, especially in

improving the nutritional status of family members. In this study, it was found that provision of nutrition education had a significant impact on nutrition knowledge among sub samples. So it can be concluded that nutrition education plays a vital role in improving the nutritional knowledge, which in turn will improve the nutritional status of the respondents and their family members.

Axelson, Brinberg, 1992, McKinnon et al, 2014, Moorman, 1996, Parmenter, Wardle, 1999- The paper focuses on the nutrition knowledge referring to knowledge of concepts and processes related to nutrition and health including knowledge of diet and health, diet and disease, foods representing major sources of nutrients, and dietary guidelines and recommendations.

Florence, Asbridge & Veugelers, 2008 – the study concludes that the academic performance of an individual has a huge impact on their life. If a person has a high level of education, they are likely to live a healthier life, have a higher income, and enhanced economic status.

3. Objectives of the study

- To find the knowledge and awareness about nutrition among college students.
- To find out the students’ interest about the nutritious value of food.
- To acknowledge understanding of nutrition information on food labels by students.
- To recognize the level of consciousness of students towards their individual health.
- To compare the level of consciousness between the students of north and south India.

4. Research methodology

With the view of pursuing the paper in a systematic manner, following research methodology have been used. It falls under descriptive research category as detailed opinions of the individuals have been obtained. The paper is mainly based on primary data and secondary data for the analysis of students’ awareness about nutrition. The primary data was collected by self-prepared questionnaire relating to nutrition and its awareness which was widely distributed among people in Google form. For the study the sample size was of 100 respondents where 50 respondents were from north and rest from south. The secondary data was basically collected from the websites. Using the responses from questionnaire and secondary data, the research has been coded and analyzed.

5. Limitations to research

The study is done on the results of handful people i.e. the sample size is too small, hence cannot be generalized.

6. Analysis and interpretation

For the analysis and interpretation various factors were

considered such as age, educational qualification, region etc. of the students i.e. the respondents were of different age group above 18 years particularly from different cities of north and south region with different educational qualifications who were students by their occupation. According to the survey conducted, following results were analyzed:

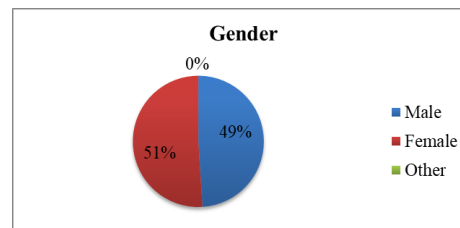


Fig. 1. Gender

According to the survey done among 100 students, 51% of the population was female and rest i.e. 49% was male category.

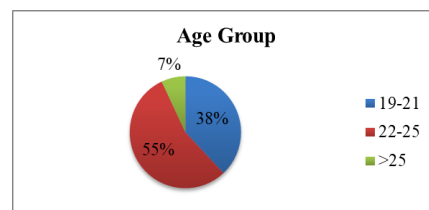


Fig. 2. Age group

57% of the total respondents fall between the age group of 22 to 25 years. 42% of individuals grouped between 19 to 21 years whereas only 1% of the population was above the age of 25 years.

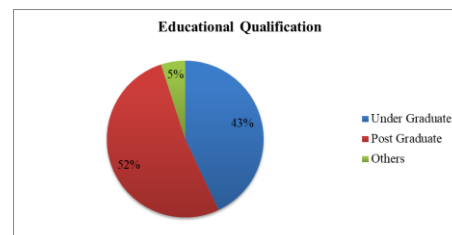


Fig. 3. Educational qualification

Of the total population 52% of the respondents were students with qualification of post graduate while 43% of respondents where under graduate. According to the response 5% of population was qualified with other education.

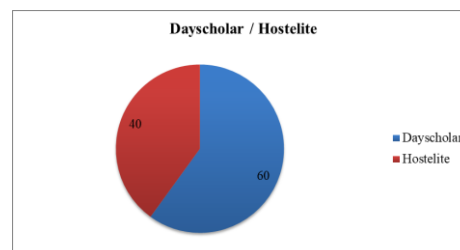


Fig. 4. Day scholar

Among the respondent to the survey, 60% of students were day-scholar who were pursuing their studies residing at home and rest 40% were hostelite.

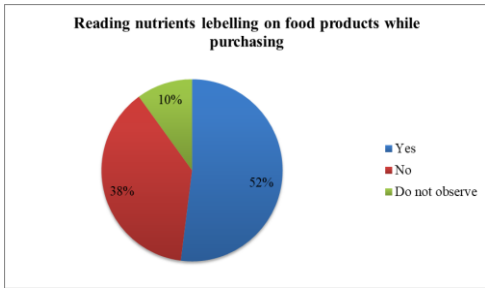


Fig. 5. Reading nutrients

Above chart reveals that 52% of the students read the nutrients labeling on food products while purchasing. It was also analyzed that 38% of students out of total population do not read the labeling of nutrients written on the food products at the time of purchasing. There were 10% of the students who do not observe the nutrient labeling.

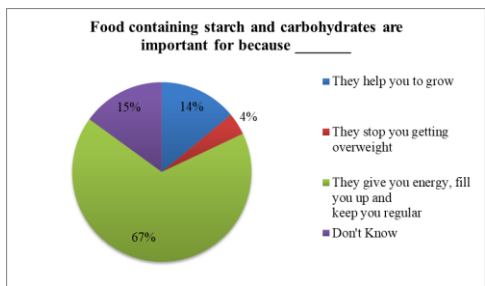


Fig. 6. Food

Above chart shows that only 67% of the population (students) knows the importance of food containing starch and carbohydrates i.e. they give energy and keep regular. 14% of students think that starch and carbohydrates only help to grow while 4% of respondents think that starch and carbohydrates stop from getting overweight. There were 15% of respondents who didn't know the importance of food containing starch and carbohydrates.

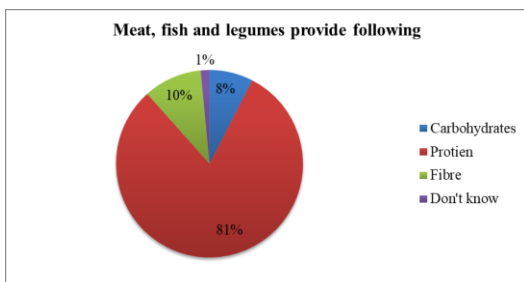


Fig. 7. Meat fish and legumes

As per the survey conducted among students, 81% of the students know that meat, fish and legumes such as chick peas & kidney beans provide protein. There were 10% and 8% of

students who think that these food products provide fibre and carbohydrates respectively. Out of the total population of survey only 1% of respondents don't know the nutrient provided by meat, fish and legumes.

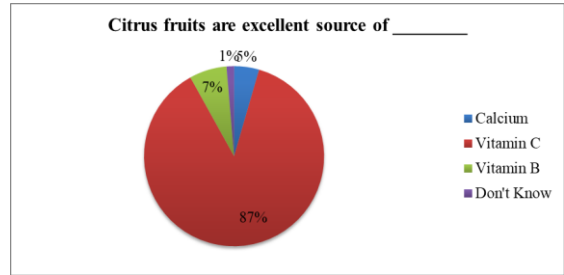


Fig. 8. Citrus fruits

Figure 8 shows that 87% of the students in the survey know that citrus fruits are excellent source of Vitamin C whereas 7% of respondents think that these citrus fruits are source of Vitamin B. 5% of population think that these fruits are source of calcium while 1% of students don't know.

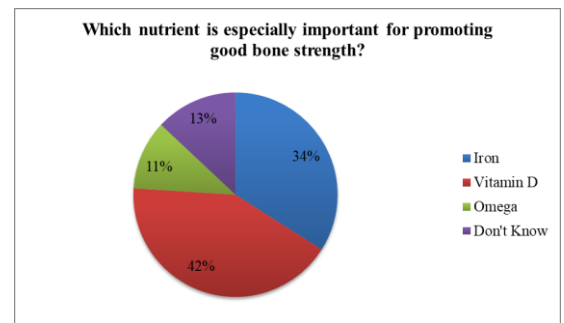


Fig. 9. nutrients

According to the survey conducted, only 42% i.e. almost less than half of the population knows that Vitamin D is especially important for promoting good bone strength. 34% of the students think that iron is the nutrient required for enhancing good bone strength whereas 11% of students think that omega is important for bone strength. There were 13% of respondent in survey who didn't have idea about the nutrient promoting good bone strength.

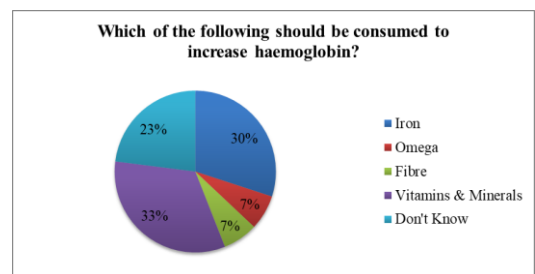


Fig. 10. Haemoglobin

Above fig. 10 reveals the awareness of the student regarding nutrient needed for hemoglobin. It was analyzed that only 23%

of respondents (students) know that iron is needed to be consumed for increasing hemoglobin. 33% of the students think that vitamin & minerals increases hemoglobin in blood. 7% each of the population think that fiber and omega is required for increasing hemoglobin. There were 30% of students who didn't know the nutrient required for increasing hemoglobin.

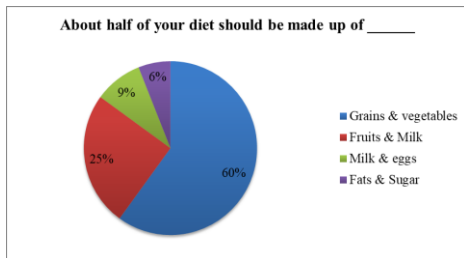


Fig. 11. Diet

According to the survey 60% of the respondents know that half of the diet should be made of grains and vegetables while 25% of them think for fruits & milk. It was depicted that 9% of students think milk and eggs is the required half of the diet while 6% think that half of the diet should be of fats and sugar.

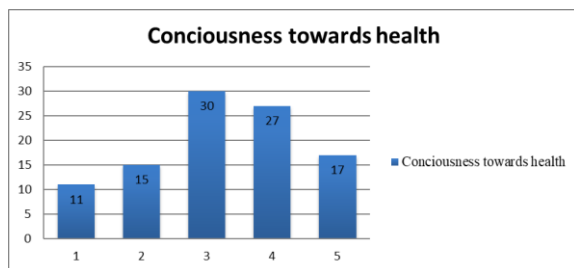


Fig. 12. Consciousness health

In a linear scale rating of 1 to 5, 30% of the students rated 3 to their consciousness towards their health. 27% of the total population of sample size rated their consciousness towards health 4. 5 rating was given by 17% of the individuals while 15% of them assigned 2 for their health consciousness. There are 11% of respondents who rated 1 to their consciousness towards health.

Table 1
Level of Consciousness

Level of Consciousness	1	2	3	4	5
In North	6	10	20	7	7
In South	5	5	10	20	10

Table 1, shows the consciousness level about health of the

Table 2
Category and consciousness

Category	Less Conscious	Very Conscious
North	16/50 * 100 = 32%	14/50 * 100 = 28%
South	10/50 * 100 = 20%	30/50 * 100 = 60%

college students in northern and southern part of India. 50 respondents from each region responded with level of consciousness in the linear scale rating from 1 to 5 where 1 is the least conscious and 5 is the most conscious.

16 respondents in the northern region are less conscious about their health rating 1 & 2 whereas in the southern region there are 10 respondents who are less conscious.

14 respondents in the northern region are very conscious about their health rating 4 & 5 whereas in the southern region there are 30 respondents who are more conscious.

Table 2, states that 32% from North India and 20% from South India are less conscious towards health whereas 28% from North India and 60% from South India are more conscious towards their health.

7. Conclusion

Various factors affected the consciousness of students towards their health. The age of individuals reflected effective impact on the consciousness. Students of age group above 25 years are mainly observed more focused on their health as compare to age group below it. As per the responses in survey conducted, students have awareness about some nutrients to certain extent. The students are concerned about their health to some extent but they do not make effort to care of themselves because of some or the other reasons. There are various factors that affect the consciousness. The students living in hostel or paying guest are found more focused related to health but do not get proper nutrition. Students living in southern region are more conscious for their health than that of northern region students.

References

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