

Dynamics of Health and Nutritional Practices Among the Adolescents.

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the eating habits and preferences of the younger generation. Recognising the dietary choices of youth is essential, considering their crucial influence on societal development. A well-balanced diet encourages the consumption of vital nutrients and underscores the significance of consistent physical activity. The study's results indicate a considerable absence of concern about dietary choices among young people, who tend to consume meals from restaurants frequently. Notably, it was found that social media has a considerable effect on food-related decision-making, emphasizing the necessity for additional studies in this domain.

Keywords: Youth, dietary habits, physical exercise, online purchase, preferences

Introduction

Analysing food consumption trends is vital for creating effective policies and initiatives that enhance food security, nutrition, and sustainability. Individuals' changing preferences and eating patterns can significantly affect public health. It is essential to recognize the value of maintaining traditional dietary practices, as these represent cultural heritage and provide a balanced and nutritious diet, directly influencing our overall health. A healthy population is critical for boosting a nation's productivity and encouraging economic growth. Consequently, the importance of food in fostering and maintaining comprehensive health and wellness should be seen as fundamental.

The area of nutrition includes the vital nutrients necessary for the growth, repair, and upkeep of body tissues, alongside the regulation of essential functions. These critical substances also supply the energy needed for our bodies to operate at their best. It is essential to recognize that poor eating habits can significantly affect our mood, possibly resulting in mood fluctuations and various mental health challenges. In addition, consuming large quantities of caffeine and alcohol can exacerbate feelings of anxiety, sadness, and irritability. This is a significant issue in modern society, where there is a growing focus on health, leading many to cut back on sugar and fat intake and keep track of their calorie consumption for improved overall health.

Physical activity and nutrition are crucial elements in shaping the overall health of a population, but they are also aspects within our control. We can greatly enhance our well-being by making thoughtful choices regarding these factors. Consistent physical activity is widely recognised as a beneficial habit that fosters healthier eating patterns and is vital in managing overall dietary behaviours. In contrast, unhealthy eating habits can significantly affect one's ability to function at their best, increasing fatigue and stress levels. These issues can subsequently heighten the likelihood of various health problems like obesity, hypertension, tooth decay, and other ailments. Numerous processed or packaged frozen or canned foods are loaded with excessive added sugars, salt, oils, calories, and preservatives. These additives are utilised to improve flavour and extend the shelf life of food products. However, the consumption of these items raises the risk of developing health complications such as high blood pressure, elevated blood sugar levels, and heart disease.

It is crucial to be aware of the potential risks of consuming such items and make informed choices about our diets. Choosing whole, unprocessed foods and carefully examining nutrition labels can help reduce the intake of these harmful ingredients. Picking foods rich in vital nutrients and incorporating regular exercise into our daily habits can aid in achieving a healthy weight and lifestyle. As a result, this approach can help decrease the likelihood of developing chronic diseases, such as cancer.

Nureng Deuraseh (2014) In their article titled "Islamic Dietary Habits for the Preservation of Health," the author explores the relationship between Islamic dietary practices and health maintenance. The study concluded that dietary habits and food selections are essential factors affecting individuals' health, regardless of their health status. A balanced and appropriate diet is vital for maintaining good health. It was observed that only a minor fraction of people comply with a proper and adequate diet. In many instances, the diet is inadequate in amount or quality compared to what is genuinely needed.

Diewertje Sluik, Rianne Bezemer, Aafje Sierksma, and Edith Feskens (2015) This review systematically and critically evaluates the current literature regarding the relationship between the preference for alcoholic beverages and adult dietary habits. Individuals who favour beer typically displayed less favourable dietary practices in different study groups and countries. In Western populations, a preference for wine was closely associated with healthier eating habits, whereas this connection was not seen in Mediterranean populations. There was limited information regarding the dietary habits of those with different preferences or those who do not consume alcohol.

.Grace Bennett, Elysia Young, Isabel Butler, and Shelly Coe (2021) investigated the impact of dietary habits across various demographic groups. They discovered that alterations in eating patterns were associated with adverse effects like weight gain, mental health challenges, and decreased levels of physical activity. Such dietary changes could considerably affect public health in the short term and longer.

Maria Carolina Lopez-Mateus, Erwin Hernando Hernandez-Rincon, and Camilo AlejandroCorreal-Munoz(2017)

Highlight the significance of creating an educational approach to encourage healthy behaviours, including proper nutrition and physical activity, as a vital component of overall hypertension management among older adults. They recommend engaging in activities such as leveraging agricultural resources, advocating for dance as an exercise, implementing motivational techniques, partnering with organisations dedicated to elder care, and empowering facilitators. The authors emphasize that interventions should consider and uphold the community context, as local resources are crucial in promoting health.

Analysis and Discussion

A balanced diet's significance is essential for sustaining good health and well-being. A wholesome diet plays a vital role in preventing several chronic health issues such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. Investigating the eating patterns of individuals aims to assess the dietary tendencies and spending habits within households. Additionally, it seeks to explore the factors that affect food selections among young people and their understanding of nutrition-related topics. Moreover, the study examines how physical activity influences the dietary choices of the youth. Ultimately, the research intends to gather insights into the younger generation's nutritional requirements and food preferences. The information presented in Tables 1.1 to 1.11 is sourced from a questionnaire filled out by 80 respondents from the Kannur municipal area in the Kannur district. The survey targeted the eating habits of young individuals aged 18 to 25

Food Consumption (veg/non-veg)

Table 1.1

Consumption	No.of responses	Percentage (%)
Veg	1	1.25
Non-veg	4	5
Mixed	75	93.75
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

In Table 1.1, we can see that a significant majority, approximately 93.75 per cent of individuals, prefer a diet that includes a mix of vegetarian and non-vegetarian food items. In stark contrast, a mere 1.25 per cent of the population exclusively consumes vegetables. This highlights the overwhelming tendency towards mixed food consumption among the surveyed group.

Meat Consumption

Table 1.2

Consumption	No.of responses	Percentage (%)
Daily	9	11.25
Weekly	44	55
Monthly	26	32.5
Never	1	1.25
Total	80	100

Source: Survey Data

Table 1.2 indicates that 55 percent of people consume meat weekly, 32.5 percent consume meat monthly, and only 10 percent eat meat daily.

Amount Allotted to buy food products in a month

Table 1.3

Amount(in Rupees)	No.of responses	Percentage (%)
Below 5000	30	37.5
5000-7000	44	55
7000-8000	6	7.5
More than 8000	-	
Total	80	100

Source: Survey Data

Table 1.3 indicates that among the 80 samples, 55% of individuals were allocated 5000-7000 rupees for purchasing food products each month, while 37.5% reserved an amount under 5000 rupees. None of the respondents in the sample spent over 8000 rupees on food.

Preference for Restaurant Food**Table 1.4**

Days per month	No. of responses	Percentage(%)
Below 5 days	48	60
5-7 days	10	12.5
7-10 days	18	22.5
Above 10 days	4	5
Total	80	100

Source: Survey Data

Table 1.4 states that 60% of people only have food from outside for less than 5 days, and 12.5% only have food from outside for 5-7 days. However, 22.5 % of the sample youth prefer outside food between 7 and 10 days per month.

Online Food Purchase**Table 1.5**

Items	No.of responses	Percentage (%)
Veg	-	-
Non-veg	28	35
Mixed	52	65
Total	80	100

Source: Survey Data

Table 1.5 highlights that 35 per cent of individuals prefer ordering non-vegetarian food through online services, whereas 65 per cent select a mix of vegetarian and non-vegetarian options. This suggests a diverse range of preferences among consumers regarding online food ordering.

Status of Online food Purchases after Covid-19**Table 1.6**

Category	No.of responses	Percentage (%)
Highly increased	18	22.5
Slightly increased	42	52.5
No change	20	25
Total	80	100

Source: Survey Data

Table 1.6 provides opinions about the status of online food purchases after COVID-19. Around 22.5 per cent agreed that there was a high increase in such purchases after the COVID period, and 52.5 per cent mentioned a slight increase compared to the previous period.

Influence of social media on food consumption**Table 1.7**

	Number of responses	Percentage
Agree	42	52.5
Partially agree	22	27.5
Fully agree	2	2.5
Never	14	17.5
Total	80	100

Source: Survey Data

Table 1.7 shows that 52.5 percent of people say social media has influenced their food consumption, and 27.5 percent say it has not.

Table 1.8: Factors Determine food choices

Factor	Number of Response	Percentage
Nutritional content	16	20
Taste	52	65
Gratification	33	41.25
Choice of family	12	15
Culture and belief	7	8.75

Source: Survey data

Table 1.8 details the various factors influencing the food preferences of younger individuals. Predominantly, 65 percent of their decision-making is influenced by the taste of the food. Following closely behind, approximately 41.25 per cent consider the satisfaction derived from the food. The nutritional value of the food holds relatively less significance in their decision-making process.

Time spent on exercise

Table 1.9

Hour per day	No. of respondents	Percentage
0.5 hour	36	45
1 hour	12	15
More than 1 hour	2	2.5
Never	30	37.5
Total	80	100

Source: Survey Data

Table 1.9 explains that 45 per cent of people exercise for 0.5 hours daily, but 37.5 per cent don't. 15 per cent exercise for 1 hour, and 2.5 per cent for more than 1 hour.

The analysis reveals that a significant number of young people do not prioritize healthy habits when it comes to their diet. Instead of focusing on the nutritional value of their food, they are more concerned with taste and satisfaction. This often leads them to favour fast food, restaurant meals, soft drinks, and non-vegetarian options. While they understand the importance of nutrition and physical activity, their food choices are primarily driven by time constraints, comfort, and a desire for immediate gratification.

Conclusion

To achieve optimal physical and mental well-being, it is essential to develop healthy eating habits. Eating nutrient-rich foods is crucial for supplying the vital energy and nutrients necessary for overall wellness. This discussion will outline some simple and effective strategies for establishing healthy eating patterns. Choosing nutritious foods offers numerous benefits, influencing various aspects of our lives. It not only enhances physical health but also positively impacts mental well-being. The formation of healthy eating habits is essential for maintaining excellent health. By incorporating these basic principles into daily life, one can nourish the body with nutrient-dense foods, providing the crucial energy and nutrients needed for thriving. Developing healthy eating habits entails gradually modifying one's dietary and lifestyle choices.

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