

Knowledge and awareness of food and nutrition in school children

K. S. Vikaraman, R. Gayatri Devi*, A. Jyothipriya

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Nutritional needs changes throughout an individual's life, depending on the genetics rate of the growth, daily activity, and other factors. Nutrition is very important for sustaining human life but is especially important for children because it is directly linked to all aspects of the growth and development, factors which will ultimately have direct effects on their level of health as adults. The main aim of this study is to create knowledge and awareness of food and nutrition in school children.

Materials and Methods: A cross-sectional questionnaire-based study was conducted among school children in Namakkal district. The questionnaire mainly consists of nutritional requirements, proteins rich food, and vegetables consumption. This was distributed about 100 school students. Data were collected and analyzed with statistics.

Results: From this, it is concluded that children were not aware of their health and some solutions were been given.

Conclusion: Many of the children were aware of the nutritional value of food but they were not ready to take in their foods

KEY WORDS: Food and vegetable, Nutritional value, Awareness, Eating habits

INTRODUCTION

Nutritional needs changes throughout an individual's life, depending on the genetics rate of the growth, daily activity, and other factors.^[1] Peer pressure, parents relationship, dietary habits, and media exposure markedly note to have an influence on nutritional status, growth, and development among nutritional needs also vary from individual to individual.^[2] It is very important for sustaining human life but is especially important for children because it is directly linked to all aspects of the growth and development, factors which will ultimately have direct effects on their level of health as adults.^[3] First off, educating kids about good nutrition from an early age helps them create and maintain a well-balanced, healthy life.^[4] Although nutritional status of children and adolescents is of great concern various interventions and modification aiming, at the promotion of healthy eating behaviors has limited impacts due to insufficient understanding of dietary habits between different age group and gender.^[5] To promote healthier eating habits, nutrition knowledge is believed to be important, their food

habits were been changed due to increase in watching the televised food advertisement targeting the children, there is even greater need to empower children knowledge and attitudes for making proper food choice.^[6]

Nutrition-related health problem in children is increasingly significant causes of disability and premature death. On the other hand, markets offer children and adolescences more attractive foods which are low in dietary value that is canteen foods.^[7] Due to the insufficient nutrition or excessive consumption of nutrition children face a lot of problem such as obesity and health risk behavior.^[8] Snacks takes place the crucial role in dietary chart of children that are majority of children have snacks between the main meal time and few of them know eat and how much they should eat. Having snacks in the mealtime will reduce our potential level in our body. Fresh juices and fruits should be preferred to them to improve the nutritional level in the body.^[9] A healthy diet, rich in calcium and other essential vitamins and minerals will enable optimal skeletal and physical growth.^[10]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Set of questionnaires was prepared and the children age between 10 and 15 year answered the following

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Department of Physiology, Saveetha Dental College, Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Science, Saveetha University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

*Corresponding author: R. Gayatri Devi, Department of Physiology, Saveetha Dental College, Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Science, Saveetha University, 162, Poonamallee High Road, Chennai – 600 077, Tamil Nadu, India. E-mail: gayatri.physio88@gmail.com

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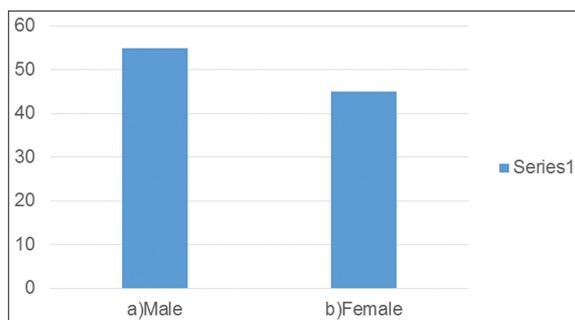


Figure 1: Sex

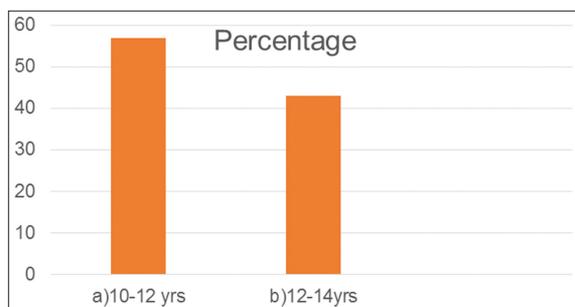


Figure 2: Age

question with the help of this survey graph has been plotted.

Inclusion Criteria

The age between 10 and 14 years is considered as children and they have been selected.

Exclusion Criteria

Individual >14 years were not taken.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the analyzed data, the results were obtained.

The most information of the students was recognized in the scope of nutritional habits whereas the poorest awareness was found in the scope of food groups, minerals, and vitamins.^[11] Compared to males, females were most aware in almost all aspects of nutritional knowledge evaluation^[12] [Figure 1].

Some studies have reported a direct correlation between age [Figure 2] and nutritional awareness, whereas this correlation was inconstant with some other studies.^[8,13] Several questions such as do you take multigrain cereals, meat, and broccoli [Figures 3-5] were asked among the children of Namakkal. Since rural students were considerably less aware of nutritional information more efforts, should be concentrated on an educational program in rural areas. Nonetheless, higher awareness does not necessarily result in more favorable nutritional practice and behavior.^[10] Combination of external pressure and greater awareness of health issues

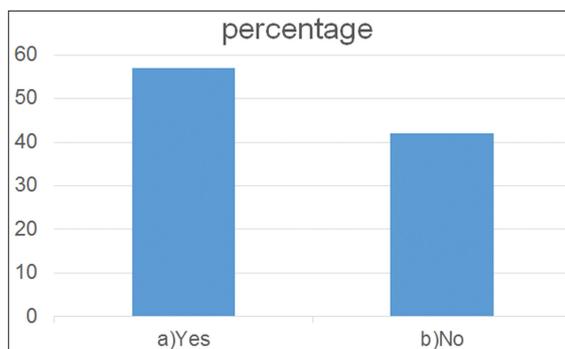


Figure 3: Will you eat whole grain cereals and multigrain, biscuits, or snacks?

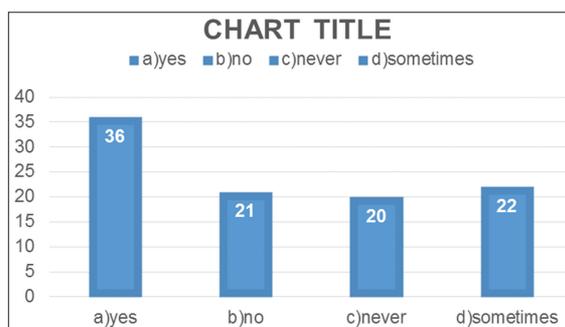


Figure 4: Do you eat meat?

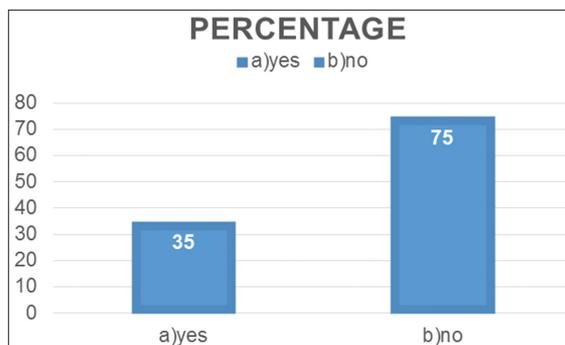


Figure 5: Do you like to add broccoli in your salads

suggests that primary school girls may be particularly vulnerable to information acquired outside of the family environment and thus may require a different approach to nutritional education to separate the issues of dieting and health.

Family income or education level, as indicators of social status, has been linked to greater nutritional awareness although few studies link social status and knowledge directly.^[14,15] The issues of taste and preference were highlighted throughout the focus groups, supporting the dominance of these concepts in relation to decisions about food classification and consumption.^[16]

CONCLUSION

From this, it is concluded that children were not aware of their health and some solutions were been given.

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