

Maintainance of Healthy Lifestyle and Changes in the Food Pattern Among College Students Aged 17 - 25

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Abstract - To assess student's knowledge in maintaining healthy lifestyle, To determine the changes in food pattern after Covid 19, To assess the influence of social platform in food habits among students . **Introduction:** Eating a balanced diet is vital to maintain a good health and well being. We need a wide variety of different food to provide a right amount of nutrients for a good health. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle will prevent students from illness and maintain their body and mental health in a good state. **Materials and methodology:** This study was conducted by online survey method. A Google form questionnaire was circulated via social media. Eligible participants were college students aged 17-25 years. The target sample given was 60 and the sample achieved was 120. **Results and discussion:** The outcome of our study states that knowledge on maintaining a healthy lifestyle were tend to be moderate among college students and we can also see there is an increase in intake of fruits and vegetables after covid 19 and it was found that there was more number of participants who follow influencers comparing to a dietitian on social media. **Conclusion:** A healthy diet is important to play a significant role in the lives of college students. An adequate, well balanced diet combined with proper sleep time is a cornerstone of a good health. To improve the state of living a healthy lifestyle, awareness must be developed among college students by following up a healthy behavior by choosing a balanced diet.

Index Terms - Balanced diet, Covid19, Healthy lifestyle, Nutrition, Social platform.

I.INTRODUCTION

Good health is needed to manage day to day life, prevent diseases, manage stress, work, sleep and also keeps us in good shape. World health organization defines that health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Barriers to healthy lifestyle are especially stress and diet related among

adolescents and youth. Male had more barriers to healthy lifestyle than female, except in the domain of physical activity [1]. One of the study found that the knowledge about healthy food choices and skills related to food preparation were lacking among college students and a lack of innate motivation was recognized as an important factor in making positive changes [2].

Our study focuses on healthy lifestyle and changes in food consumption among college students. Our study was done in order to observe the changes in student's way of life towards food and impact in their food pattern due to covid – 19 and social platform. Entering college, it can be difficult as students to balance academics, work, and healthy life. They hardly have time prepare their own meal at home. Students who reside along with parents tend to consume more meat, fruits and vegetables than students who live away from home [3].

Common barriers to healthy eating were time constraints, unhealthy snacking, convenience high-calorie food, stress, high prices of healthy food, and easy access to junk food [4]. Social media is negatively related to students, as they spend hours of time, not completing their assignment ending up having poor grades [5]. In terms of food, Social influence can be one of the reasons behind the food choices because we tend to consume foods distinctly when somebody is around us. One of the study said that the calorie intake decreases when the individual is paying attention to the posted nutrition facts. On the other hand, dining in a group with one or more obese members increases calorie intake in foods like pizza and pasta. [6]

The initial objective of our study was to assess the student's lifestyle in terms food such as intake of balanced diet, consumption of fruits and vegetables, skipping meals etc. Secondly, was to assess their changes in the food pattern after covid – 19, such as

preferring homemade meals, healthier food over tastier ones, etc. Final objective of this study was to assess the influence of social platform such as following diet like their peer group member, following nutritionist or an influencer who promote products on social media like Instagram, Facebook, twitter.

II. MATERIALS AND METHADLOGY:

This study was conducted by online survey method. A Google form questionnaire was circulated via social media. The eligible participants were college students aged 17-25 years, who were transitioning from adolescence to young adulthood. This study included participants from undergraduate and postgraduate who are from various streams like science, arts, medical, law, commerce, engineering like B.Tech, M.Tech and others. In addition, we chose to have mixed-gender groups, which could produce a greater variety of responses and better discussions. The target sample given was 60 and the sample achieved was 120. There were 115 participants from Tamilnadu, 2 participants from Karnataka, 1 participant from Andhra, 1 participant from Gujarat and 1 participant from Poland.

In relation to three main objective 17 questions were asked. The questionnaire consisted of four sections, the first section requested on the Demographic data including the participants age, gender, year of study, pursuing course, name of the city. The second section of the questionnaire consisted of four questions in the aspect to assess the basic nutrition in college student's lifestyle. The third section of the questionnaire consists of four questions based on the changes in food habits after covid-19 among population. The fourth section of the questionnaire had 4 questions and was built to assess the influence of social media platform in food habits among college students

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study focuses on assessing the lifestyle and changes in the food pattern of college students aged 17 to 25. The changes in their food pattern and lifestyle are evaluated on the terms of Covid-19 and influence of social platform. About 120 samples were collected in which 84 (70%) students were female, 35 (29.20%) were male and one (0.8%) preferred the gender not to be known. The age group of 17-25 years was classified

into three categories of which the mean (\pm SD) of age group of 17-19 years were 18.36 ± 0.76 years and the mean (\pm SD) of 20-22 years were 20.28 ± 0.58 where as 23-25 years had no participation.

Participants from various major participated in the survey which includes 111 participants are from bachelor's degree and 9 participants from master's degree. 49 participants were from Bachelor's of science, 29 participants from Bachelor's of arts, and 12 participants from Bachelor's of engineering. 9 participants are from Bachelor's of law, 8 participants from Bachelor's of technology and architecture. 2 participants were from Bachelor's of medicine and dental surgery, 2 participants from other major. 6 participants were from Master's of science, 2 participants from Master's of arts, and 1 participant from Master's of technology. When looking at the mean (\pm SD) of the year of study it was observed that the mean (\pm SD) was 30 ± 26.36 participants participated from various years of study.

Assessing the healthy lifestyle

Good nutrition is the prerequisite of growth and critical for socio economic development. College students need to have a healthy diet, which includes a variety of food, to provide them with the amount of proper nutrients which their body needs. [7] According to Budd et al, adequate nutrition, i.e., balanced dietary intake is the right proportion of food nutrients needed for growth, energy and maintenance. Malnutrition is the pathological stage resulting from a relative or absolute deficiency or wrong proposition of essential nutrients. College students do not take into account the seriousness of their health behaviors [8]. Balanced diet and regular exercise helps to maintain healthy body weight. Sleep deprivation will leads to health issues commonly impairs affective regulation and causes worse more [9]. It is very important to maintain a proper sleep. Intake of fruits and vegetables contain several vitamins and minerals and are highly fibrous so it is very important to consume fruits and vegetables. Several studies have found that nutritional label use contributes to a better dietary intake or to reduced consumption of 'unhealthy' foods. [10]

Participants were questioned about the balanced diet and consumption of fruits and vegetables. Participants were also asked if they skip any part of their meal in a day and whether they check nutritional label before

purchasing a food product. About 36.7% of participants were uncertain of consumption balanced diet. The intake of fruits and vegetables on a day to day basis were 75.8% participants among them. There were 50% of participants who did not skip their meals in a day and remaining 50% of participants skip atleast one of their meals. From the responses, it is also known that only 49.2% of participants check for the nutrition label when they purchase a food product. Thus, the basic knowledge about their food intake, awareness about maintaining a healthy lifestyle were tend to be moderate.

Changes in food pattern after covid-19

Participants were questioned about their changes in the food habits after covid – 19. Participants were asked about their changes in intake of fruits and vegetables. Majority around 40.8% participants responded that they have increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables after covid - 19. Also they were questioned regarding the intake of non vegetarian foods. Most of participants around 40.6% answered that there has been no changes in their intake of meat and seafood. Questions on preference of meals and healthier food choices over tastier ones were questioned. It is known that majority around 55% of participants preferred homemade meals over dining or delivery and about 42.5% of participants acknowledged that they preferred healthy foods over tastier ones. Thus, changes in the food pattern after covid are noted to be having considerable changes as mentioned above.

Influence of social platform in food habits

Participants were questioned about the influence of diet habits of their peer group member via social media. Maximum, around 47.5% participants has responded that they do not feel like following a diet when their peer group member shares on social media. It was also questioned whether they follow any influencers on social media who post about healthy eating or their weight loss journey. It is seen that majority around 46.7% participants follow influencers on social media. From following the influencers, maximum percentage that is 40.2% participants answered that the content posted by influencers had a positive impact on them. About 61.7% of participants responded that they do not follow nutritional professionals or a dietitian on social media. Therefore,

the influence from social media has been considerate and to an extent among college students.

IV.CONCLUSION

The aim of our study focuses on healthy lifestyle and changes in food consumption among college students and the study also helped us to understand the changes in students way of life towards food, impact in their food pattern due to covid 19 and influence of social platform. An adequate, well balanced diet combined with proper sleep time is a cornerstone of a good health. The outcome of our study states that the basic knowledge about their food intake, awareness about maintaining a healthy lifestyle was tend to be moderate and we can also see a majority of students have improved their intake of fruits and vegetables after the covid 19, and we can also observe that there is a maximum percentage in following influencers on social media than professional such as nutritionist or a dietitian. There must be more awareness to be built among college students about following up a healthy behavior like maintaining a balanced diet, to follow up a proper sleep time and to prefer more homemade meals and to cut off tastier foods over healthy foods.

V.LIMITATIONS

This study included only the age group between 17 to 25, in which participants from 23 to 25 category were not found to answer the questionnaire. Also the study was conducted through an online questionnaire and major number of participants were from southern part of India (tamilnadu).

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