



# PSYCHO-SOCIAL STUDY OF EFFECT OF UNHEALTHY FOOD IN ADOLESCENTS

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**Abstract:** Fast food products are often rumored to cause a variety of health problems. Ingredients that are synthetic, high in sugar or fat are not meant to be eaten on a regular basis. Eating these ingredients regularly can lead to health problems including heart disease, diabetes and cancers. Fast food is convenient and tasty though it is prepared with low nourishing or unhealthy ingredients.

**Index Terms:** Adolescents, fast food, health hazard, unhealthy diet.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Food plays a very important role in growth and development of adolescents, during which the development of healthy eating habits is of supreme importance.

There is a double burden of under-nutrition and over-nutrition in this age-group. Eating habit has a great impact on the nutrition an adolescent and gently influenced by peers, mass media, social and cultural norms [1-8]. Eating habits of adolescents are also important because when they settle down as adult they have to establish behavior in a new family.

Fast foods have high level of fat and carbohydrates that are not only unhealthy but addictive and that creates a vicious cycle making it hard for children to choose healthy food. High amount of trans fat in commercially available fast foods predispose children to risk of future heart diseases. Energy density of fast foods is more than twice the recommended daily allowance for children. Fast food ingestion leads to higher proportion of calories being derived from total and saturated fat.

Previous study that evaluated food habits in adolescents also discovered low health concerns in adolescent's food choices. Knowledge about food is considered to be beneficial not only for food choice and healthy weight reduction but also as concerns its long-term implication for general health. Food label reading has previously been used as a tool for nutritional education [9-15]. Girls and older adolescents seem to be better educated as they are interested in having more information on food labels when they buy food and thus are interested in having more information on food labels when they buy food and thus are more aware of its implication for weight and health.

## II. MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

The present study was undertaken to examine the effect of food hazard in adolescences. Collection of data was carried out by perceiving the views and ideas from the girls and boys through filling up of structured questionnaire and interview.

## III. RESULTS AND DISSCUSSION

The results show that boys are generally more active than girls, a factor that can also affect the amount of food consumed and the food choices. However, in our study we collected no data regarding the physical activity of adolescents. It is good that nearly 70% of both groups adolescents perceive their weight appropriately. Almost 43% of overweight adolescents have tried to go on a diet at some time, but the question is how long can heavier children stay on an intervention program.

In common, girls tend to overestimate and boys underestimate, their weight. Over 30% of adolescents exclude certain foods from their menu. Possible causes may include food allergies or children's greater pickiness. In this age category, around 50% of students eat in the school cafeteria, which is about 10-20% fewer than the children in elementary schools.

The result of the survey also reveals that there is a large reserve in the area of correct adolescent nutrition. It is noticed that high school students have higher vitamin intake than those in Govt. Polytechnic Institution attributed to high school students consume more fruits and vegetables than Polytechnic Institution students and the nutritional knowledge of high school students is higher than those in Polytechnic Institution students.

Our result are in consistent with other studies who stated that declines in fruits and vegetables consumption, as youth progress from elementary school to preparatory school to high school. Changes in family meal patterns may be contributing to these trends.

Increasing the frequency of fruit and vitamin intake increases the vitamin intake. It can be noticed that females have higher intake of vitamin than males. Also, having lunch with family increases the frequency of fruit and vegetable intake resulting in an increase in vitamin intake.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Our findings are constituent with many recent studies among young people of different populations that have reported unhealthy dietary habits. Therefore, we conclude that nutrition education programs should focus on increasing intake of fruits, vegetables, milk and dairy products in parallel with decreasing consumption of high fat containing snacks, sweets, fast food and soft drinks, in particular, among adolescents. Further studies especially, longitudinal repeated measures of dietary pattern in adolescents, rather than cross sectional assessments are needed to provide better opportunities for monitoring healthy eating behavior and nutritional status and for timely identifying the newly emerged factors which eventually prevent diseases occurring in later life.

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