

Cognizance about Junk Food and its Consumption among College Girls in Haryana

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Abstract

Healthy food comprises of a plethora of nutrients not only to keep the body vigorous but also the mind and soul. It augments the body's immunity and upsurges the brain's functionality as well. On the contrary, junk food is an empty calorie food, low in nutritional content and its consumption in excess may result in multiple disorders in the body. It is very unfortunate to note that in the globalized world, some people generally consider themselves modern if they consume junk food. They get attracted towards that delicious and convenient food which is not actually healthy for them. Young generation are seen to be fascinated more towards such type of food because of its attractive appearance, delicious taste, convenience low cost and easy to consume as compared to others.

The present paper aims to present the opinion of college girls regarding junk food and generate awareness among them for its consumption pattern. The study was carried out on 302 college going girls of District Karnal (Haryana). For this purpose, self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data via Google form. The findings of the study reveal that all college girls were consuming junk food because of its delicious taste. 66.2% of students gave their opinion about junk food as unhealthy while 85.7% of respondents considered fruits as a better option. The analysis of the data showed that college girls were having good knowledge about healthy food, in spite of that they were spending a massive amount on junk food, preferring it more to healthy food.

As students are the future of a country, nutritional diet will make them physically and mentally fit. So, it is recommended to organize awareness programs for them in schools and colleges regarding the drawbacks of eating junk food and the advantages of nutritious food & also the best combination of food.

Keywords: Junk Food, Nutritional Content, Consumption Pattern, Students.

Introduction

"The first wealth is health"

- Ralph Waldo Emerson (Poet and Essayist)

A vigorous body is a human pride and a healthy body is more than any treasure of the world as it increases elegance and connotation to life. Considering the proper health care approaches, the four recognized and focused aspects of well-being are: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual and they work together to make healthy person. No matter how other components of healthy lifestyles are maintained, it would be difficult if food, eating habits and good nutrition is overlooked. Individualized nutrition comprehends that each body is biologically unique, therefore the intake of diets needed is to be inimitable too.

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Adopting balanced and nutritious diet is not a fad or trend, but a life long journey of choices that we make to create balance in our lives and to achieve the highest potential of well-being for our body, mind and soul.

Good nutrition is the key to leading a healthy lifestyle. But in today's rising scenario, low quality nourishment utilization pattern is expanding across the globe. The progress in the way of life and dietary propensities is prompting numerous non-transferable illnesses. Shoddy

nourishment is characterized as food which is promptly accessible, typically reasonable and possibly nutritious. Such type of food contains great number of calories, more salt, higher substance of saturated fat and contains less iron, calcium and dietary fiber.

Junk food is considered to be an inferior, energy dense food with high amount of refined sugar, refined flour, trans fat, saturated fat, salt, numerous additives and low nutrient value in terms of protein, fiber, vitamin and minerals. The more we devour these, the less is the admission of fundamental supplements and nutrients in the body. Its regular consumption may prompt a great deal of medical issues like:

1. Increased obesity
2. Loss of memory and learning problems
3. Depression
4. Worsens appetite and digestion
5. Inadequate growth and development
6. Hypertension
7. Osteoporosis
8. Type -2 diabetes
9. Cancer
10. Heart diseases
11. PCOD
12. PCOS

The term 'junk food' was coined as slang in the public interest in 1972 by Michael Jacobson, Director of the Centre for Science, Washington D. C .Junk food is easily available, convenient, need little or no preparation and usually consumed on the go, apart from being very delicious and cheap. Taste, time, money, cleanliness and hygiene are the major factors which have attracted the students towards fast food and are assumed as the primary reasons behind increasing consumption among students in Colleges and Universities. They visit junk food outlets not only for meal but also for interacting with friends and classmates. As college girls are in the child-bearing age, so they must eat a balanced diet. But these students typically eat a diet lacking in fruits, vegetables and dairy products.

Review of Literature

Feely et al. (2009) found that fast food contains high levels of calories, sugar, salt and a smaller number of micronutrients and fibers whereas Bahadoran et al. (2012) stated that the fast food is speedily prepared, easily accessible, moderately inexpensive and favored by people of all age groups.

According to Dhande, Pari & Kumar et al.(2017),people consumed fast food because of its delicious taste. They have put forward that 31.8% of their respondents were unaware of the detrimental role of fast-food consumption. They suggested conducting awareness campaign regarding its harmful effects and expediency of balanced diet.

Shami & Fatima et al. (2017) investigated that there is no correlation between perception of fast food being unhealthy and frequency of consumption of fast food among college girls. They

also mentioned that it is the responsibility of the Government to regulate the fast-food markets and limit its usage in schools and colleges for the improved health of younger generation while Normala et al.(2018) reported more consumption of fast food among female-students rather than male-students.

Research Problem

Meagre work has been done on creating awareness about junk food and its consumption among college girls of District Karnal, Haryana. Therefore, a dire need to acquaint and create awareness among college girls was felt about the importance of good health and improving their eating habits.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the awareness of college girls about junk food.
2. To study the opinion of college girls about junk food.
3. To find out the consumption pattern of junk food among college girls.

Methodology

1. Locale of the Study and Selection of the Sample: The present study is mainly concentrated on the cognizance about junk food and its consumption among college girls of District Karnal, Haryana.
2. Pre- testing of Questionnaire: The formulated questionnaire was pre-tested on 10 subjects to check if it was necessary to reformulate the questions incase, they were inappropriate and not properly understood and responded by students.
3. Period of Survey: The data was collected in the month of December,2020
4. Collection of Data: In the present study, questionnaire method was used for data collection. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: part first was related to demographic information and part two was related to junk food eating habits, awareness and opinion about it. College going girls filled this questionnaire via online mode through Google form.302 students responded.
5. Statistical Tools for Data Analysis:
 - I. Coding: The data was organized into classes and a symbol was given to each item according to the class in which it felt.
 - II. Calculation and Tabulation: The data was transferred to coding sheets to classify and emphasize the point of similarity and dissimilarity in the data obtained and to express the complex, haphazard, scattered data in a concise, logically intelligent form. After classification, data was arranged in the form of tables to make results of the study clear and expressing it in minimum space.
 - III. Statistical Analysis of Data: The data collected was analyzed statistically viz. frequency and percentage

Result & Discussion

Table 1: Sample Profile

Characteristics	Frequency (302)	Percentage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age (years) - Less than 18 - 18-20 - More than 20 	89 162 51	29.4 53.6 16.8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of Family - Nuclear - Joint 	154 148	50.9 49.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Income (Family) - Upto 30,000 - Upto 60,000 - Upto 1 lac - Above 1 lac 	51 83 99 69	16.8 27.4 32.7 22.8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupation (Father) - Govt. Job - Private job - Self-employed - Farmer 	60 47 91 104	19.8 15.5 30.1 34.4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupation (Mother) - Housewife - Service 	251 51	83.1 16.8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential Area - Rural - Urban 	150 152	49.6 50.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marital Status - Married - Unmarried 	11 291	3.64 96.3

Table 1 indicates that most of the college students (53.6%) were from the age group of 18-20 years. 29.4% students were less than 18 years and 16.8% were of more than 20 years. 50.9% of the students lived in nuclear families and 49% of the students were from joint family. Income showed that majority of students(32.7%) were from the family having monthly income up to 1 lac followed by up to 60,000 (27.4%). 22.8% of the students belonged from

the family having income above one lac and 16.8% were from the family whose monthly income was up to Rs. 30,000. Occupations of the parents revealed that in majority of the respondents (34.4%), fathers were farmers and 15.5% of were in private job whereas majority of the mothers were housewives. About 50.3% subjects were from rural area while 49.6% were from urban area. Most of the respondents (96.3%) were unmarried.

Table2: Cognizance about Junk Food

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check quality of junk food - Yes - No 	250 52	82.7 17.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check nutrient fact label of junk food - Yes - No - Do not know 	128 74 100	42.3 24.5 33.1

Table 2 exposes that 82.7% of the students answered in affirmation that they do check the quality and 17.2% of students replied in negative that they never check the quality of junk food. When they were asked about Nutrient Fact Label, 42.3% of respondents answered that they always check the

label and 24.5% of the respondents replied that they never checked the label.33.1% of the respondents were not aware about the nutrient fact label. Gopal et al. (2012) in a study found that only 43% of the students checked the quality of the junk food.

Table3: Opinion about Junk Food

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junk food is bad for you <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No 	200 102	66.2 33.7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junk food can be good alternative to healthy food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No 	40 262	13.2 86.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumption of junk food makes a person overweight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No 	245 57	81.1 18.8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of junk food, fruits can be better option <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No 	259 43	85.7 14.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heart diseases are associated with consumption of junk food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No 	259 43	85.7 14.2

Table 3 reveals that about 66.2% of the respondents were of the opinion that junk food is not good for them and remaining 33.7% considered junk food to be good for their health.86.2% of the respondents answered that junk food could be good alternative to healthy food, and remaining 13.2% did not agree with this statement. Majority of the respondents (81.1%) replied that consumption of junk food makes a person overweight and 18.8%

disagreed with this statement. 85.7% of the respondents had an opinion that fruits can be a better option but 14.2% did not have a similar opinion.85.7% of respondents opined that heart diseases are associated with consumption of junk food and remaining 14.2% disagreed with this statement. Gopal et al.(2012) also reported that 85% of the college students considered junk food as unhealthy for them.

Table4: Junk Food Eating Habits

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consume junk food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No 	302 -	100 -
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time of consuming junk food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Morning - Noon - Evening - Night 	17 102 172 11	5.6 33.7 56.9 3.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason for consuming junk food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Status symbol - Just for taste - As a normal meal 	23 255 24	7.6 84.4 7.9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consume more junk food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In group - Alone 	259 43	85.7 14.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of meals replaced with junk food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One - Two - More than two 	258 25 19	85.4 8.2 6.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addicted to junk food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No 	227 75	75.1 24.8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumption of junk food increases during stress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No 	212 90	70.1 29.8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habits of consuming junk food increasing day by day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes - No - Cannot say 	205 63 34	67.8 20.8 11.2

Table 4 depicts that all college girls were eating junk food. Out of them, 56.9% of the respondents were consuming junk food in evening followed by 33.7% in the afternoon. 5.62% of the respondents were taking junk food in morning and rest 3.6% were consuming at night. Further, it is revealed that majority of the respondents (84.4%) were eating junk food just because of its delicious taste. Almost equal numbers of respondents (7.6%) were taking junk food because of their status symbol and 7.9% as normal meal. 85.7% of the respondents were consuming junk food in groups and only 14.2% of respondents were eating junk food when they were alone. Subsequent analysis of data also shows that majority of the students (85.4%) replaced one meal with junk food and 8.2% of the respondents replaced

more than two meals with junk food. Remaining 6.2% has an intake of junk food in place of more than two normal meals. 75.1% of the respondents were addicted to junk food while 70.1% of the students admitted to consume more during stress. 29.9% of students replied that there is no connection between stress and consumption of junk food.

Majority of the respondents (67.8%) indicated that their habit of consuming junk food is increasing day by day. Lamba et al. (2017) also found that all the school children were eating junk food while Pari et al. (2018) found that taste factor was the main reason behind consumption of fast food among majority of pre-university students.

Table 5: Pattern of Favorite Junk Food

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Pizza	141	46.6
Burger	70	23.1
Pasta	30	9.9
Fried Food	25	8.2
Chowmin	20	6.6
Momos	16	5.2

The type of junk food preferred by the respondents is given in Table 5.

Majority of the respondents (46.6%) preferred pizza, followed by 23.1% of the respondents who liked burger. 9.93% of the respondents consumed pasta and 8.2% students liked fried food. 6.6% of the respondents preferred chowmin and remaining 5.2% liked Momos. Shehrawat et al. (2019) also reported that pizza was the most preferred junk food among college students particularly girls.

Conclusion

Everyone knows that junk food is not good for health, still most of them consume it, ignoring this truth. Therefore, there is an inordinate prerequisite to sustain the practice of good eating habits among college girls and nutrition education concerning balanced diet, food groups, meal pattern, spacing of meal, etc. should be provided to them. To conclude, it can be summed up that the focus of our findings includes the views of college going girls on junk food, their individual preferences, consumption rates and familiarity regarding the harmful health effects of over-consumption of junk food. Majority of them preferred it for taste, in groups and were also replacing their one-time meal with it. Majority accepted the fact of getting addicted to it and eating more during stress. Pizza was the most preferred junk food followed by burger. Most of the girls checked quality of junk food but nearly half of them examined the nutrient fact label while purchasing it. These students were of the opinion that consumption of junk food will make a person overweight causing ill effects on health such as heart disease. Therefore, instead of junk food, fruits to be preferred, not spending a huge amount of money on it.

Basics of nutrition should be made clear to these college girls & the best combination of food be recommended to them such as the use of discarded leaves, seasonal fruits and vegetables and dairy products. Also, acquaintance about the methods of ornamenting nutritive worth of food and diet to be provided so as to upsurge their intake of a composed diet to remain healthy because 'once we tend the root, the tree as a whole will be healthy'.

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