

Awareness on Health Effects in Taking Fast foods Among Dental students

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Awareness on Health effects in Taking Fast foods Among Dental students

ABSTRACT

AIM:

To asses the awareness on health effects in taking fast foods among dental students.

INTRODUCTION:

Healthy eating contributes to an overall sense of well-being, and is a cornerstone in the prevention of a number of conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, cancer, dental caries and asthma. For children and young people, healthy eating is particularly important for healthy growth and cognitive development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

This study was conducted among dental students who were doing their graduation in a dental college in Chennai. A self administered questionnaire consisting of 10 questions was prepared to know the knowledge of various antibiotics used in dental practice. 100 students were selected, the questionnaire were distributed through an online link. Their results were collected and tabulated.

RESULTS:

Among the respondents 55% of lacked knowledge about eating fast food could lead to food allergy among youngsters and 42% had lacked with knowledge of chemicals present in fast foods and can lead to increase in weight.

CONCLUSION:

The students lack adequate knowledge about and health effects due to eating fast foods. Study clearly shows that consumers do not visit the outlets primarily for food but for fun, change and social reasons as the prefer home food over the fast food.

KEYWORDS: fast foods, health and nutrition, high fat diets, over weight, negative health outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Consumption of fast food, which have high energy densities and glycemic loads, and expose customers to excessive portion sizes, may be greatly contributing to and escalating the rates of overweight and obesity in the USA. Whether an association exists between fast food consumption and weight gain is unclear. Sixteen studies (six cross sectional, seven prospective cohort, three experimental) meeting methodological and relevance criteria were selected for inclusion in this systematic review. While more research needs to be conducted specifically in regard to effects of fast food consumption among subpopulations such as children and adolescents, sufficient evidence exists for public health recommendations to limit fast food consumption and facilitate healthier menu selection. As the fast food industry continues to increase both domestically and abroad, the scientific findings and corresponding public health implications of the association between fast food consumption and weight are critical.

The rapid increase in obesity prevalence in the USA has baffled many public health professionals and led many to hypothesize that if trends continue, the USA will undoubtedly experience a decline in life expectancy (1, 2). The 1999–2002 National Health and Nutrition Survey data estimate that 65% of US adults are either overweight or obese, which represents a 16% increase in prevalence from data obtained between 1988 and 1994 (3). Overweight is defined as a body mass index (BMI) of 25 kg m^{-2} or over and obesity as a BMI of greater than 30 kg m^{-2} . Excessive body weight is associated with comorbidities such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, depression, infertility, and breast, endometrial, colon, and prostate cancers, unfortunately resulting in an estimated 30000 excess deaths and \$100 billion per year in medical expenditures (4-8).

Healthy eating contributes to an overall sense of well-being, and is a cornerstone in the prevention of a number of conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, cancer, dental caries and asthma. For children and young people, healthy eating is particularly important for healthy growth and cognitive development. Consumption of fast food, which have high energy densities and glycemic loads, and expose customers to excessive portion sizes, may be greatly contributing to and escalating the rates of overweight and obesity. Whether an association exists. between fast food consumption and weight gain is unclear. Most of the college students say that their snacking is always junk and fast food, but still, they wanted to maintain a balanced diet to stay healthy. Hence, many students are aware of balanced diet and their eating practices [6]. Eating away from home is becoming more common, and fast food restaurant use in particular is growing even more rapidly. In 1970, money spent on away-from-home foods represented 25% of total food spending; by 1995, it comprised 40% of total food spending¹ and by 1999 it reached a record 47.5% of total food spending.² It is projected that, by 2010, 53% of the food dollar will be spent away from home.³ Fast food has been defined as food purchased in self-service or carry-out eating places without waiter service.^{3,4,5} Between 1977 and 1995, the percentage of meals and snacks eaten at fast food restaurants increased 200%, while other restaurant use increased 150%.³ Fast food outlets are especially popular among adolescents. The average adolescent visits a fast food restaurant twice a week and fast food outlets provide about one-third of the away-from-home meals consumed by adolescents.[7]

As away-from-home foods represent an ever-larger proportion of total energy intake, their nutrient profile becomes more important to examine. Away-from-home foods are higher in fat and energy compared with foods eaten at home.[9] In 1995, away-from-home foods accounted for 27% of eating occasions, but 34% of energy intake.[9]At-home foods comprised 31% fat; by contrast, away-from-home foods comprised 38% fat energy.[9]

High-fat diets contribute to a variety of negative health outcomes, including obesity, hypercholesterolemia, cardiovascular disease and some cancers.[10,11]. Most adolescents consume diets that are higher in fat and lower in fruit and vegetables than recommended.[12]. It is therefore important to identify factors associated high-fat diets, particularly among adolescents.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

The study was designed as a prospective, questionnaire based survey. A questionnaire enquiring about the knowledge and awareness regarding health effects in taking fast foods among dental students of 3rd years, final years and interns in Saveetha Dental College. A total of 100 students were selected and an online link was given and their responses were obtained online. The questions had a set of options and the participants have to choose one among the options. They questions were simple and easy to answer. The results obtained were collected and tabulated.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Is fast food your favourite?

Yes

No

2. Where do you prefer eating fast foods?

Road side shops

Restaurant

3. Do you take fast as an alternative to breakfast?

Yes

No

Sometimes

4. Are you aware about the chemicals present in fast food and its safety level?

Yes

No

5. How many times do you eat fast food on an average a week?

- Once
- Twice
- Thrice

6. Do you feel eating fast food increase GI Tract problems?

- Yes
- No

7. Do you feel eating fast food increase you weight?

- Yes
- No

8. Do you think eating fast food increase food allergy among youngsters?

- Yes
- No

9. What are the factors influencing the choice of fast food?

- Time
- Taste
- Life style

10. In your opinion do you consider fast food is healthy?

- Yes
- No

Results

The respondents in our survey within the age group of 20-24 years and the number of Male and female respondents were almost equal with 52% of female respondents and 48% were male respondents. Among 100 respondents more than 61% of respondents choose their favourite as fast food.(figure:1). Considering the preference of taking fast food 52% of respondents preferred in road side shops and 48% preferred restaurants.(figure:2). Regarding the alternative to breakfast 28% of respondents use to take fast food as alternative to breakfast and 38% of respondents answered while in sometimes.(figure: 3). Considering the chemicals present in the fast food and its safety level more than 48 % of people we're unaware about the chemicals present in fast foods.(figure4). Factors influencing the choice of fast food 26% of respondents answered due to the time which influence to fast food and more 21% answered its due change in lifestyle.(figure:5).More than 60% of respondents was unaware about the food allergy gets increased due to intake of fast foods.(figure:6) . Regarding the GI Tract problems due to to eating fast foods, more than 50% of respondents was unaware.(figure:7)

Based on the above questions the results are charted below;

Figure: 1 represents the respondents who answered fast food as favourite



Figure: 2 - place of preference of taking fast foods

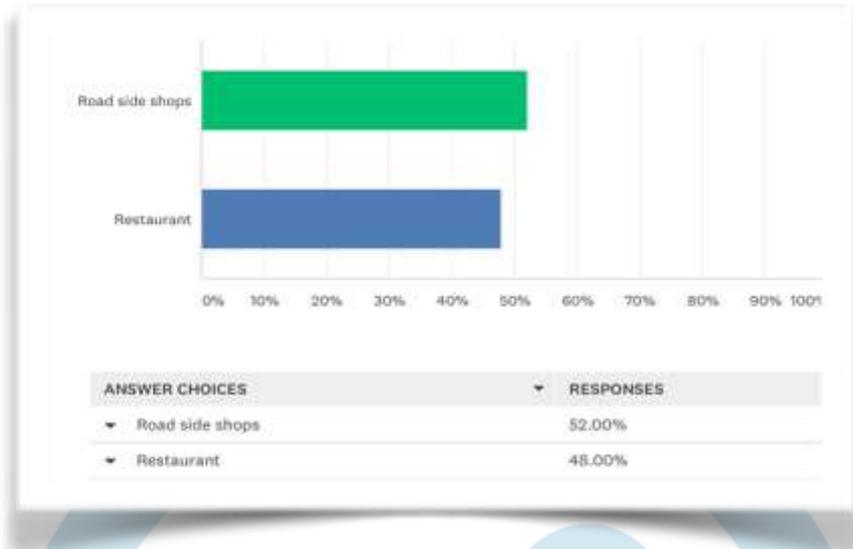


Figure: 3- represent the respondents who use to take fast food as an alternative to breakfast

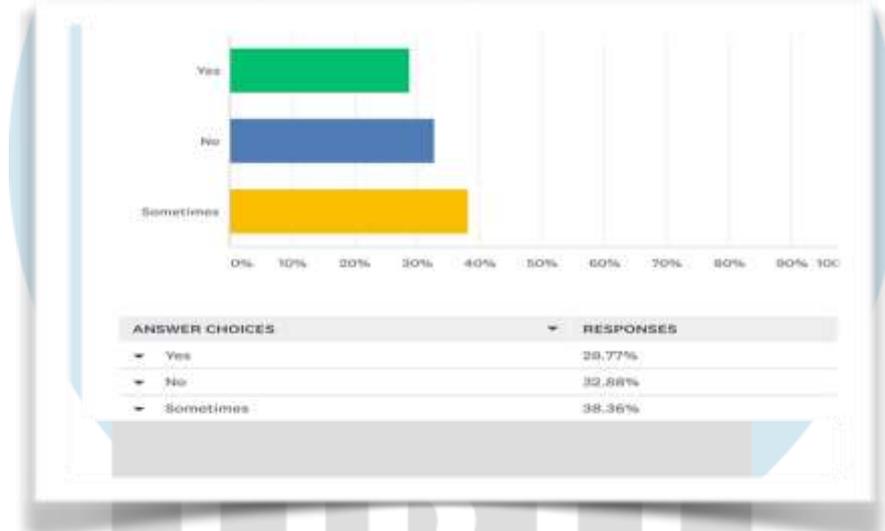


Figure: 4 - represents the knowledge of awareness of chemicals present in the fast food and safety level



Figure: 5- represents the factors influencing the choice of fast food

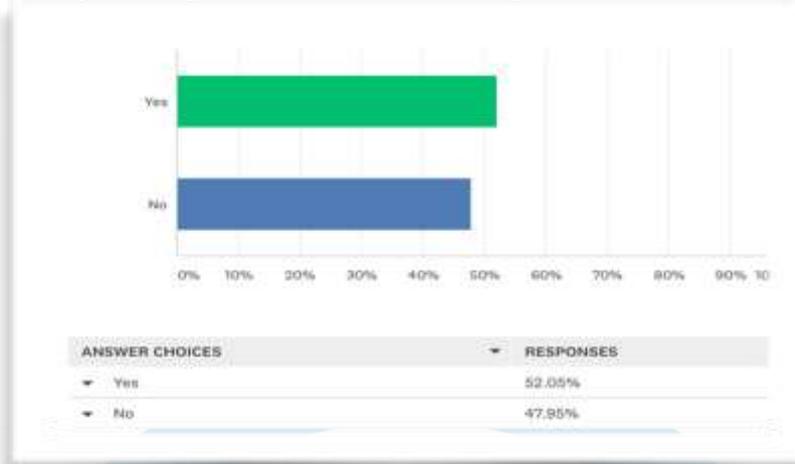


Figure: 6- represents eating fast foods increases food allergy in youngsters

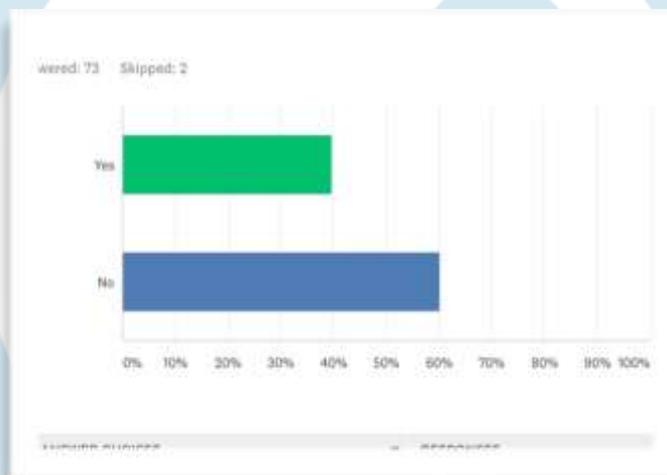
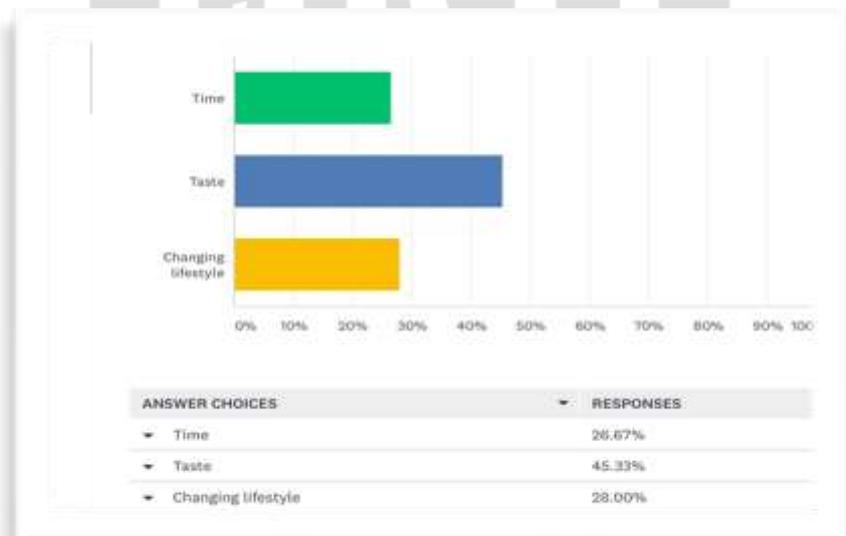


Figure: 7 - represents who feels eating fast foods increases the GI Tract problems



Discussion:

Understanding of the faulty dietary habits and the factors responsible is very essential to develop effective intervention for promoting healthy eating and minimising life style problems like obesity during adolescence which is a critical phase of developmental. However, frequency of fast food usage almost every day varied from 3.7% to 70% of students in other studies in comparison to 14.4% reported in this study [13,14-17]. Even in this fast paced way of living about 57% of the Adolescents manage to have 3 meals a day and the among the rest of them about 57% skip breakfast and are not aware about the ill effects of this action. In other similar studies, conducted in the Middle East, Skipping breakfast was reported by 14.9% of students and this habit did not differ by age, sex, body mass index or social class [1819]. In this age group of people among 78% of them there is high awareness about the necessity of a diet with proper protein, carbohydrate and fat intake. Moreover, recent knowledge of food and nutrition in teenagers in schools and media have knowledge about the health benefits of food such as , Eating foods with excessive fat requirements would cause obesity. Eating fruits and vegetables is a source of vitamin, mineral and fibres. Ways to purge extra skin and maintenance of fitness can be seen as the basic knowledge that teens know already [20].Consumption of fast foods thrice a week was reported ranging from 6.9% to 43.3% students elsewhere in comparison to 7.5% students in the present study [21,22]. This meant that pattern of fast food consumption was not as bad among students in this settings as reported elsewhere. Hence timely interventions in the form of early identification of fast food usage, focusing attention on frequent users by appropriate school and family based interventions might help to promote healthy food choices and avoidance of faulty eating habits.Studies have also found that youngsters who watch more television are more susceptible to unhealthy eating habits and unhealthy conceptions about food substances compared to others who watch minimally. This is because the current food advertising rarely promotes healthy choices and rather promotes frequent consumption of unhealthy foods making it even difficult for most parents to promote healthy eating at home [21]. Further research is also needed into the ways in which socio-cultural and other factors affect fast-food consumption in all regions.

Conclusion

Fast food consumption was reported by most students in this study. The students lack adequate knowledge about and health effects due to eating fast foods. Study clearly shows that consumers do not visit the outlets primarily for food but for fun , change and social reasons as the prefer home food over the fast food. Further, information about hygiene and nutrition value of fast food must also be communicated to consumers. Therefore the results shows there is no knowledge and awareness on health effects in taking fast foods, hence there should be awareness on quality and variety of food besides other parameters.

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