

A STUDY ON HEALTH HAZARDS OF JUNK FOODS AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

The children of today will be the adult of tomorrow, central to this vision of the future, focusing on today's children and educating them to change their behaviour towards healthy eating pattern is necessary. Nutritional problem is one of the major health problem faced by the millions children of all age group. Preventive approach to maintain good health with specific education can be of greater benefit for the children to prevent mental and physical ailments.

INTRODUCTION

It's the 21st century and "junk food" has gone global. For worse junk food is now available all over the world. We see it all most everywhere we go in grocery shop and also in convenience stores.

Children find themselves amidst of a complex society that is undergoing breath-taking changes. Concepts, relationships, lifestyles are metamorphasised to accommodate the new jet-setting age. Food is of no exception, Healthy nutritious foods have been replaced by the new food mantra - JUNK FOOD! Junk food comprises of anything that is quick, tasty, convenient and fashionable. It seems to have engulfed every age, every race and the newest entrants in children.

The director of the Centre for Science, Michael Jacobson (1972) invented the term junk food called "Empty calories". He was accredited as the "chief of the food police" by the food industry, for uncovering the harmful effects of junk food with its use of additives such as vibrant food colors, Salt and Tranfat.

Junk food is an empty calorie food. These foods have little enzyme producing vitamins, minerals, amino acids and contain high level of calories from sugar or fat. So these are called as unhealthy foods.

Foods commonly considered junk foods include salted snack foods, gum, candy, sweet desserts, fried fast food, and sugary carbonated beverages, Soft drinks, chips, wafers, noodles, pizza, burgers, French fries etc. are few examples from the vast variety of fast food available in the market.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Recently there has been a warning about the high fat content of foods in school students' lunch boxes. We want to investigate the fat content in student's lunch boxes. Across the planet, obesity in children is reaching epidemic levels. More kids are getting fatter; and not coincidentally, many of these children are the targets of saturation marketing by the junk food industry, which seeks to displace healthful local eating habits with its own high calorie, high-added-fat, and high-added-sugar junk food. A study to assess the Effectiveness of planned instructional module regarding knowledge about health hazards of junk foods among school

children.

OBJECTIVES:

- To assess the level of knowledge on health hazards of junk foods among school children before the planned instructional module [pre-test].
- To assess the effectiveness of health hazards of junk foods among school children after planned instructional module [post test].
- To determine the effectiveness of planned instructional module among school children.
- To find the association between selected demographic variables and the level of knowledge among school children.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Johnson.C.M et al, (2011) conducted a study that aimed to understand mother's everyday food choices using one type of visual method-participant-driven photo-elicitation. The study revealed that mothers with a more defined health identity made healthier choices for themselves and similar food choices for their children. In addition, they exhibited behaviours that positively influenced their children's foods choices. Mother who struggled to see themselves as healthy indulged with more junk food and indicated a feeling of anxiety and guilt, these mothers food choices were more disconnected from their children and they tend to prepare more junkfood for their children instead of healthy nutritious foods.

Boyland (2012) stated in British department of health that almost one in ten of six year olds and fifteen percent of fifteen year old children in England were currently classified as obese. Britain is facing an obesity epidemic, A watershed for junk food adverts would ensure that they are banned from not just children's programs during the day but programs shown at night where families view them together. Parents also need to limit their children's screen time and talk to them about the motives behind advertising junk foods.

Ashley Gerhardt (2013) published in his journal of archives of general psychiatry found that the addictive nature of many junk foods is literally the same as the addictive nature of drugs. These rewarding properties however lie primarily in junk food chemicals. Many processed junk foods are loaded with flavor enhancing chemicals like monosodium glutamate (MSG), high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS), and aspartame which are known to be highly-addictive. MSG, for instance, over-excites the brain to the point that it actually causes neurological brain damage.

Table 1 -AGEWISE PREFERENCE OF RESPONDENTS

S.NO	AGE	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	8-9 Years	5	10
2	9-10 Years	10	20
3	10-11 Years	10	20
4	11-12 Years	25	50
	Total	50	100

The above table shows the distribution of sample respondents by their age composition. It is revealed that 10% of the respondents are between 8-9 years, 20% of the respondents are between 9-10 years, 20% of the respondents are between 10-11 years, 50% of the respondents

are between 11-12 years.

Table 2 - GENDER USING

S.NO	GENDER	TOTAL RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Male	20	40
2.	Female	30	60
	Total	50	100

The above table shows the distribution of sample respondents by their gender composition. It is revealed that 40% of the respondents are Males, 60% of the respondents are Females

Table 3 - RESIDENTIAL AREA

S.NO	RESIDENTIAL AREA	TOTAL RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Urban	25	50
2.	Rural	25	50
	Total	50	100

The above table shows the distribution of sample respondents by their Residential area composition. It is revealed that 50% of the respondents are in urban area, 50% of the respondents are in rural area. Thus it is inferred that majority of respondents are in Urban areas.

Table 4 - EDUCATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

S.NO	EDUCATION	TOTAL REPENDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Illiterate	3	6
2	Primary	5	10
3	High school	7	14
4	HSC	20	40
5	Graduate	15	30
	TOTAL	50	100

The above table shows the distribution of sample respondents by their Education composition. It is revealed that 6% of the respondents are illiterate, 10% of the respondents are Primary, 14% of the respondents are High School, 40% of the respondents are HSC, 30% of the respondents are Graduate and above.

Table 5 - FATHER'S OCCUPATION

S.NO	OCCUPATION	TOTAL RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Salaried	23	46
2	Business	17	34
3	Cooley	10	20
	Total	50	100

The above table shows the distribution of sample respondents by their Fathers occupation composition. It is revealed that 46% of the respondents are Salaried, 34% of the respondents are Business, 20% of the respondents are Cooley.

Table 6 - FAMILY INCOME

S.NO	FAMILY INCOME	TOTAL RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	< Rs5000	3	6
2	Rs 5001-Rs10000	17	34
3	Rs10001- Rs 15000	14	28
4	Above Rs 15000	16	32
	Total	50	100

The above table shows the distribution of sample respondents by their Family Income composition. It is revealed that 6% of the respondents are <Rs5000,34% of the respondents are Rs 5001-Rs10000,28% of the respondents are Rs10001- Rs 15000, 32% of the respondents are Above Rs 15000.

Table 7 - FAMILY TYPE

S.NO	SIZE OF FAMILY	TOTAL RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Nuclear Family	37	74
2	Joint Family	13	26
	Total	50	100

The above table shows the distribution of sample respondents by their Size of Family composition. It is revealed that 74% of the respondents are in Nuclear family,26% of the respondents are in Joint family.

Table 8 - NUMBER OF SIBILINGS

S.NO	NO.OF.SIBLINGS	TOTAL RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	One	13	26
2	Two	27	54
3	Three	7	14
4	More than Three	3	6
	Total	50	100

The above table shows the distribution of sample respondents by their Siblings composition. It is revealed that 26% of the respondents are single child, 54% of the respondents are Two, 14% of the respondents are Three, and 6% of the respondents are More than Three.

Table 9 - POCKET MONEY PER MONTH

S.NO	POCKET MONEY PER MONTH	TOTAL RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	No pocket money	4	8
2	Below Rs 50	11	22
3	Rs 50-100	14	28
4	Above Rs100	21	42
	Total	50	100

The above table shows the distribution of sample respondents by their Pocket money

composition. It is revealed that 8% of the respondents don't get pocket Money, 22% of the respondents get below Rs 50, 28% of the respondents get Rs.50-100, and 50% of the respondents get Above Rs100.

Table 10 - FREQUENCY OF EATING JUNKFOOD

S.NO	FREQUENCY OF EATING JUNKFOOD	TOTAL RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Nil	13	26
2	1-3 Times	20	40
3	More than 3 times	17	34
	Total	50	100

The above table shows the distribution of sample respondents by their Frequency of Eating Junk food composition. It is revealed that 26% of the respondents doesn't eat frequency, 40% of the respondents eat 1-3 Times, 34% of the respondents eat More than 3 times. Thus it is inferred that majority of the respondents eat 1-3 times.

Table 11 - REASONS

S.NO	REASONS	TOTAL RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Feel Hungry	10	20
2	Time pass	15	30
3	School interval	13	26
4	Peer pressure	12	24
	Total	50	100

The above table shows the distribution of sample respondents by their Reasons in consumption of junk food composition. It is revealed that 20% of the respondents eat when they feel hungry, 30% of the respondents eat for Time pass, 26% of the respondents eat in school intervals, and 24% of the respondents eat due to peer pressure.

Table 12 - SOURCE OF INFORMATION

S.NO	SOURCE OF INFORMATION	TOTAL RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Mass media	27	54
2	Friends/ Relatives	15	30
3	Health personnel	2	4
4	Family member	6	12
	Total	50	100

The above table shows the distribution of sample respondents by their source of information composition. It is revealed that 54% of the respondents from Mass Media, 30% of the respondents from Friends/Relatives, 4% of the respondents from Health personnel, and 12% of the respondents from Family member.

FINDINGS

This study on among school children reveals that 50 percent of respondents belong to age group of 15-18 yrs. This study finds that, 60 percent females are addicted to Junk Foods. This study reveals that, 60 percent of urban area children consume Junk Foods. This study explains that, 46 percent of salaried parents spend more to Junk Foods for their children. This study finds

that, 74 percent of nuclear sized Family children eat more Junk Foods. This study reveals that, 54 percent of two siblings in a family consume more Junk Foods. This study explains that, 42 percent of children having above 100 rupees as pocket money eat lots of Junk Foods. This study explains that, 40 percent of children eat Junk Food 3 times a day. This study finds that, 30 percent of children eat Junk Foods for Time pass. This study explains that, 54 percent information about Junk Foods is found in Mass Media.

SUGGESTIONS

Parents should not give more pocket money for their children. Most of the school students intake junk food so that the school administration should provide healthy snack like fresh juice, green grams, fruits etc. Children eat due to depression; parents should give more attention and spend time with them.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that before the planned instructional module the school children had inadequate knowledge and lack of awareness about health hazards of junk foods. But after the intervention of planned instructional module, there was improvement in their level of knowledge about the hazards of junk foods. Today's children are Tomorrow's future. Nutrition during the formative period has a meaningful long-term effect, providing building blocks to construct the growing brain. So, it is necessary for the Educators, Health Personnel and the Government to create awareness about healthy eating habits among the school children in order to improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

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