A STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE ON HARMFUL EFFECTS OF JUNK FOOD AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AT SELECTED SCHOOLS, KARAikal

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Abstract: Background: Children find themselves amidst of a complex society that is undergoing breathtaking 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 Food is of no exception, Healthy nutritious foods have been replaced by the new food mantra - JUNK FOOD!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. Objective: 1.To assess the knowledge regarding harmful effects of junk food among high school students. 2.To find the association between the knowledge regarding harmful effects of junk food with their selected demographic variables among high school students. Material and Methods: Quantitative approach and non-experimental descriptive research design. The study was conducted in Rm.A.S.Packirisamy pillai High School, Karaikalmedu, Karaikal. 60 samples of High school students were selected by non-probability convenient sampling technique. The tool consists of two sections. Section-A consists of semi structured interview schedule to elicit the demographic variables and Section-B consists of semi structured interview schedule regarding harmful effects of Junk food. Result: The study result shows that majority 83.3% (50) of High school students had inadequate knowledge, 13.3% (8) had moderate knowledge, and 3.3% (2) of them had adequate knowledge regarding harmful effects of junk food. There is a significant association between the knowledge on harmful effects of fast food with their demographic variables such as age, class of studying, education of the mother and source of information regarding junk food. There is no association with respect to other demographic variables such as religion, gender, type of family, monthly income, education of the father, occupation of the father, occupation of the mother, previous knowledge on effects of junk food on health.

Keywords: High school students, knowledge, junk food.

INTRODUCTION:

Food is an important part of a balanced diet. It is something everyone needs, every day. Life can be sustained only with adequate nourishment. Man needs food for growth, development and to lead an active and healthy life. Food is a substance, usually composed of carbohydrates, fats, proteins and water that can be eaten or drunk by an animal or human for nutrition or pleasure. Fast food is the term given to food that can be prepared and served very quickly. The term “junk food” was recognized in a dictionary by Merriam–Webster in 1951. Fast food is any food that is quick, convenient, and usually inexpensive. It is delicious, it is filling, is really affordable, and readily available just any time of the day, being only a drive through phone call away.

Good health is the necessity of living a healthy existence for every person which needs to maintain a healthy diet and healthy habits throughout the life. However, the habit of consuming junk food in many is increasing each day and making our future sad and diseased mainly our younger generations.

Most of the children’s of this age at some point of their meal time they eat junk meals and get addicted to the taste of...
junk meals. Though, junk foods are tasty but it has low nutritive value and excessive calories. Junk ingredients come to be very oily and absence of nutritional fibers as a consequence they're tough to digest and require more power to carry out the method from body and make someone loss of oxygen level inside the body which lead toward fallacious brain functioning. Junk ingredients are high in bad cholesterol and cause heart and liver harm. Because of loss of dietary fibers they cause stress to the parts of the digestive organs and result in constipation and diarrhea.

Junk foods are full of harmful effects which cause harm to a human body. Some of the health hazards of the junk food are Extra Calories, Insulin Resistance, High Blood Pressure, Bloating and Puffiness, Shortness of Breath, Depression, Dental Distress, Blood Sugar Spike, Over Weight Problem, High Cholesterol, Hard on the Heart, Headache, and Acne etc. It also affects ones learning ability like brain power, intelligence and non-treatable disease like cancer, digestive problems, fatigue and weakness, kidney disease.

Poor nutrition during any of the stages can leave the bad effect on the children’s growth and development, resulting in decreased learning ability, poor concentration in the study, and impaired school performance.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**
A study to assess the knowledge on harmful effects of junk food among high school students at selected schools, karaikal

**OBJECTIVES:**
- To assess the knowledge regarding harmful effects of junk food among high school students.
- To find the association between the knowledge regarding harmful effects of junk food with their selected demographic variables among high school students.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS**
- Research design: Non experimental descriptive design.
- Setting : Rm.A.S.Packirisamy pillai High School, Karaikalmedu, Karaikal
- Population: High school students
- Sampling technique: Convenient sampling technique
- Sample size: sample size is comprised of 60

**Description and development of tool**
The tool consists of two sections. Section A consist of Questionnaire to elicit demographic variables of high school students such as age, class of studying, religion, type of family, monthly income, education of the father, education of the mother, occupation of the father, occupation of the mother, source of information. Section B consists of 25 semi structured questionnaire to assess the knowledge junk food among High school students.

**Ethical consideration:**
The research proposal was approved by the dissertation committee by Vinayaka Mission’s College of Nursing and Research Foundation (DU), karaikal. Formal permission was obtained from the Principal of, Rm.A.S.Packirisamy pillai High School, Karaikalmedu, karaikal, where the study was conducted. Informed oral consent was obtained from the study participants, after explaining the nature and duration of the study.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:**
**Major findings of the study:**
- Majority of the respondents i.e 24(40%) were in the age group of 12-13 years 21 (35%) were in the age group of 13-14 years and the least 15(25%) were in the age group of 15-16 years and none were in 14-15 years of age group.
- Regarding Gender majority of them 32(53.3%) were girls and 28 (46.6%) of them were boys.
- Regarding Religion majority 42(70%) were Hindus, 10(16.6%) were Christians, only 8(13.3%) were Muslims, and no one belong to other religion.
- Considering Class of studying majority of them 24(40%) were studying in 8th standard, 21(35%) were studying in 9th standard, and the least 15(25%) were in 11th standard and none of them were in 10th standard.
- Regarding Type of family majority 55(91.6%) were living in nuclear family,5(8.3%) were living in joint family and no one belongs to extended family.
**Considering Monthly Income** majority of them 25(41.6%) were getting monthly salary between Rs10,000-12,000, 20(33.3%) were getting monthly salary above Rs15,000, 15(25%) were earning between Rs 5000-10,000 and no one is getting below Rs 5000.

- With regard to education of the father majority 21(35%) had completed their secondary school education, 19(31.6%) had completed their primary school education, 17(28.3%) of them graduate and only 3(5%) were illiterate.

- Regarding education of the mother majority 24(40%) had completed their primary school education, 20(33.3%) had completed their secondary school education, 11(18.3%) of them graduate and only 5(8.3%) were illiterate.

- Considering occupation of the father majority 38(63.3%) were working in private job, 9(15%) were doing Business, 7(11.6%) were in Government job and 6(10%) were working as a collie.

- Considering occupation of the mother majority 29(48.3%) were house wives 19(31.6%) were in private job, 10(16.6%) were involved in Business and only 2(3.3%) were doing Government job.

- Regarding the previous knowledge on effects of junk food on health majority 51(85%) did not know about effects of junk food on health, 9(15%) had known about effects of junk food on health.

- Regarding source of information majority 5(8.3%) were known about junk food through Mass media, 4(6.6%) were come to know through friends and none of them were known through Health care professionals and others.

**Level of knowledge regarding Junk food among High school students.**

The present study results revealed that, level of knowledge regarding junk food 83.3% (50) of High school students have inadequate level of knowledge, 13.3% (8) of High school students have moderately adequate level of knowledge, and 3.3%(2) High school students have adequate level of knowledge. The data was analyzed by using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

**Fig.1**

- The present study revealed that, there is a association between level of knowledge regarding fast food with their demographic variables such as age, class of studying, mother’s educational qualification and source of information regarding junk food which is significant at $p<0.05$ level. The Chi square test was used to find the association between level of knowledge regarding harmful effects of junk food with their selected demographic variables.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- A similar study can be conducted to find the differences in the knowledge level of the adolescent children on the basis of various institutional settings such as government and private institutions, state board and matriculation school.

- A similar study can be conducted to find differences in the knowledge level of the adolescent children studying in the schools located in urban and rural areas.

- A similar study can be conducted to find differences in the knowledge level, attitude and practice.

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