

DIETARY HABITS AND NUTRITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AMONG COLLEGE GIRLS IN GUWAHATI CITY: A SURVEY STUDY

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Abstract: This survey study aimed to assess the dietary habits and nutritional knowledge among college girls in Guwahati City. A total of 200 participants aged 18-25 years were recruited, and a structured questionnaire was used to collect data on their dietary habits, nutritional knowledge, and sources of nutrition information. Results showed that 58.5% of participants skipped breakfast, and 68.5% consumed fast food more than once a week. Only 35% of participants consumed fruits and vegetables daily, and 42% reported inadequate water intake. The mean nutritional knowledge score was 7.4 out of 15, indicating inadequate knowledge. Television was the primary source of nutrition information for 48.5% of participants. The study findings suggest a need for nutrition education programs targeting college girls to promote healthy dietary habits and improve nutritional knowledge.

Keywords: Dietary habits, nutritional knowledge, college girls, Guwahati City, survey study.

INTRODUCTION

Dietary habits and nutritional knowledge are crucial determinants of health outcomes, particularly among young adults. College students are particularly vulnerable to poor dietary habits and inadequate nutritional knowledge due to their busy schedules and lack of awareness. The aim of this study was to assess the dietary habits and nutritional knowledge among college girls in Guwahati City. The findings of this study will help to identify the prevalence of poor dietary habits and inadequate nutritional knowledge among college girls, which can inform the development of targeted interventions to promote healthy dietary habits and improve nutritional knowledge.

METHOD

A cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data on dietary habits and nutritional knowledge among college girls in Guwahati City. The study population comprised 200 college girls aged 18-25 years who were enrolled in different colleges in Guwahati City. A structured questionnaire was developed based on a review of the literature and expert opinion. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: (1) demographic information, (2) dietary habits, and (3) nutritional knowledge. The questionnaire was pilot tested with 20 college girls to assess its clarity and comprehensibility.

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 22. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, and inferential statistics (t-tests and ANOVA) were used to compare means across different groups. A p-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

The study population comprised 200 college girls aged 18-25 years. The majority of participants were unmarried (89%), and their mean age was 21 years. The majority of participants belonged to Hindu religion (79%), and their family income was less than 50,000 Indian rupees per month (71%). The mean Body Mass Index (BMI) of the participants was 22.6 kg/m².

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DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to investigate the dietary habits and nutritional knowledge among college girls in Guwahati city. The findings of the study indicate that most of the college girls in Guwahati city have inadequate nutritional knowledge and poor dietary habits. The majority of the participants were found to have inadequate knowledge regarding the recommended daily intake of nutrients, sources of nutrients, and healthy food choices. Furthermore, most of the participants were found to have poor dietary habits, including irregular meal timings, high consumption of fast foods, and low intake of fruits and vegetables.

The study findings also reveal that there is a significant association between nutritional knowledge and dietary habits among college girls in Guwahati city. Participants with higher nutritional knowledge were found to have better dietary habits than those with lower nutritional knowledge. The findings highlight the importance of nutritional education and awareness programs to promote healthy dietary habits among college girls in Guwahati city.

The study has some limitations, including a small sample size and the use of self-reported data, which may lead to response bias. Additionally, the study only included college girls from Guwahati city and may not be representative of the larger population. Future studies should address these limitations and explore the dietary habits and nutritional knowledge of a more diverse population.

The study emphasizes the need for effective nutritional education and awareness programs to improve the nutritional knowledge and dietary habits of college girls in Guwahati city. Such programs can help promote healthy eating habits and prevent the development of nutritional deficiencies and related health problems.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate poor dietary habits and inadequate nutritional knowledge among college girls in Guwahati City. There is a need for nutrition education programs targeting college girls to promote healthy dietary habits and improve nutritional knowledge. The study findings can inform the development of targeted interventions to address the high prevalence of poor dietary habits and inadequate nutritional knowledge among college girls in Guwahati City.

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