

Original Research

Study on eating habits among 1st year MBBS Students in a south Indian medical college

¹Arifuddin. M.K, ²Mir Viqar Ahmed

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Physiology, Sri Siddhartha Medical College, Tumkur, India;

²Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Sridevi Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Hospital, Tumkur, India

ABSTRACT:

Background: Proper eating habits are one of the essential day today activities and lifestyle behavior which determines and helps in imposing an positive impact on the health of a human being. After entering into the professional courses and embracing the education in university, the Students start getting exposed to various academic challenges and adjustment problems related to hostels, which indirectly influences their eating habits. The future doctors in their student life are expected to practice good dietary habits. Due to persistent academic stressors and time constraints, In spite of having adequate knowledge about the importance of healthy eating habits, they experience greater difficulty in putting this background knowledge into practical application. **Objectives:** To assess the eating habits and perceived challenges to maintain healthy eating habits of 1st year MBBS students. **Methodology:** This study was carried out among first year MBBS students belonging to 2015-16 batch of SSMC, Tumkur. A self-structured questionnaire was prepared consisting of questions which were used to assess the eating habits of the study population. The responses of participants were analyzed using Microsoft excel and Epi Info 7. **Results:** 63 (48.46%) reported to consumption of all 3 major meals in a day. Skipping of breakfast was seen in 53(40.76%), skipping of lunch 16(12.3%) and skipping of dinner 5 (3.84%) was reported. 61(46.92%) reported that having no time as the reason for skipping meals. 6(4.61%) reported that a skipped meals to control weight. **Conclusion:** It is the need of the hour to increase the awareness among medical students regarding practice of healthy eating habits and maintenance of healthy lifestyle practices for good academic outcome and healthy future.

Keywords: Dietary habits, Hostel, Barriers, medical students.

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Corresponding author: Arifuddin. M.K, Assistant Professor, Department of Physiology, Sri Siddhartha Medical College, Tumkur, India

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INTRODUCTION

Eating habits is one of the most essential lifestyle behaviors which helps in ensuring the good health of an individual. A healthy diet is one which includes lots of fresh veggies, fresh fruits and foods containing macronutrients, micronutrients, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. [1]. Social, economical factors have a direct impact on the eating habits of an individual [2]. Cultivation of unhealthy eating habits in the early adult life will lead to development of lifestyle related diseases like diabetes mellitus, hypertension, dyslipidemia and obesity in the future. After entering into the professional courses and embracing the education in university, the Students start getting exposed to various academic challenges and adjustment problems related to hostels, which

indirectly influences their eating habits[3]. These acquired behaviors which includes unhealthy eating habits if picked up in college could persists throughout the adult life and lead to various detrimental consequences [4]. The future doctors in their student life are expected to practice good dietary habits. Due to persistent academic stressors and time constraints, In spite of having adequate knowledge about the importance of healthy eating habits, they experience greater difficulty in putting this background knowledge into practical application [5]. The dietary patterns are greatly affected by the various challenges of university education system and academic stress while studying medicine [6]. Having healthy eating habits assumes importance in medical students life because as future medical service

providers in the community it is important for them to maintain personal healthy lifestyle which will help them to guide their future patients regarding the importance of having good eating habits[7]. Hence this present study was taken up to find out and analyse the eating habits and perceived barriers to maintain healthy eating habits of 1st Year MBBS students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was carried out among 1st year MBBS students belonging to 2015-16 batch of SSMC,

Tumakuru, Karnataka after obtaining the approval of institutional ethical committee. All the 130 students were enrolled in the present study. A self-structured questionnaire was prepared which had the questions to assess the eating habits of our study population. Informed consent was taken from all the study participants after explaining the need for the study in detail in their own understandable language. The responses were analyzed using Microsoft excel and Epi Info 7.

RESULTS

Table-1: Age and gender distribution

	Mean	Standard deviation
Age of the subject	18.05	0.52
Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Female	70	53.84
Male	60	46.15

Table-2: Characteristics

Characteristics	
Consumption of all 3 major meals	60 (46.15%)
Skipping of breakfast	53 (40.76%)
Skipping of lunch	12 (9.23%)
Skipping of dinner	5 (3.84%)
Fruits	29(22.30%)
Vegetables	69 (53.07%)
Soft drinks	70 (53.84%)
Salted snacks	80 (61.53%)
Fried food & chats	85 (65.38%)

Table-3: Perceived barriers

Perceived barriers	
(a) Skipping meals	
No time	61 (46.92%)
Weight control	6 (4.61%)
(b) Healthy dietary habits	
Lack of time	63 (48.46%)
Lack of knowledge	3 (2.30%)
Stress	37 (28.46%)
Taste preferences	53 (40.76%)

DISCUSSION

Among the study subjects 60 (46.15%) were males and 70 (53.84%) were females. Mean age of the study subjects was 18.05. In the present study the assessment of dietary pattern revealed that 60(46.15%) reported to consumption of all 3 major meals in a day. Skipping of breakfast was seen in 53(40.76%) , skipping of lunch 12 (9.23%) and skipping of dinner 5 (3.84%) was reported.

In other study done by Manigeh Alavil where they studied eating habits among adolescent girls, they found that 48.4% skipped breakfast and 8.3% skipped lunch [8].

About 29(22.30%) of the respondents reported to consumption of fruits every day. 69(53.07%) said that they ate vegetables regularly on a daily basis.

70(53.84%) of the study population reported to consumption of soft drinks. 80 (61.53%) of the study population ate salted snacks and 85 (65.38%) ate fried food and chats on a regular basis.

In another study done by Sami H Alzahrani and et al. where they studied eating habits among medical students at King Abdulaziz University at Saudi Arabia, they have found that only 20.4% consumed vegetables and 11.9% of the study population consumed fruits on a daily basis [9].

In the present study the assessment of perceived barriers revealed that 61(46.92%) said that, having no time as the reason for skipping meals. 6(4.61%) said that they skipped the meals in order to control weight. Present study revealed that lack of time in 63(48.46%), was the reason for them not to maintain

healthy eating habits. Lack of knowledge regarding healthy eating habits was found in 3 (2.30%) of the present study population. 37(28.46%) said academic stress as the reason for not maintaining healthy eating habits. 53(40.76%) reported, taste preference was the reason for them not to adhere to healthy eating habits. In another study done by Rubina A Sajwani when they compared the barriers to healthy lifestyle among medical and non medical students they found that lack of time was the reason among 52.3% of medicos and 57.1% in non medicos as the reason for skipping meals [10].

CONCLUSION

In the present study the assessment of eating habits of 1st year MBBS students revealed that there is increased intake of carbonated drinks, snacks and deep fried foods when compared with the consumption of veggies and natural fresh fruits. So it is the need of the hour to increase the awareness among students of medical institution regarding healthy eating habits and maintenance of healthy lifestyle practices for their healthy present and future.

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