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## ASSESS THE PERCEPTION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS ABOUT RISK FACTORS RELATED TO FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION AND THEIR EATING HABITS

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### ABSTRACT

**Background of the study:** Consuming fast food and junk food has become popular among college students. High calorie, sugar, and sodium content in fast food diets can lead to body fat gain and have an impact on BMI (Body Mass Index). In 2014, 39% of adults aged 18 and older were overweight, with 13% being obese, according to the WHO. Over 85% of college students consumed fast food, with over 17% doing so daily.

**Objective:** The research tried to find out the perception of college students regarding the risk factors of fast-food and their eating habits of the selected college of Vadodara. **Material and method:** The study's sample method was a non-randomized practical sampling method. There were 230 college students in the sample, drawn from specific Vadodara city colleges. The tool is divided into three sections: a demographic tool, structured surveys with a Likert scale, and a Yes/No checklist about college students' perceptions of the risks associated with consuming fast food and their eating habits. The descriptive and inferential statistics used in the data analysis were planned taking into account the research study's hypothesis and the study's objectives. **Result:** More than one-fifth of those polled (64.3%) were between the ages of 18 and 20, while 34.3% were between the ages of 21 and 23. 74.3 percent of responders are female, while 26.7 percent are male. Students are aware that fast food is harmful and can contribute to obesity, yet the delectable and distinct flavour entices them. Students' eating habits results negative perception of 23%, a favourable perception of 66.1%, and a risk perception of 10.9%. **Discussion and**

**Conclusion:** Even though students are aware that fast food is harmful and can lead to obesity, they are nonetheless drawn in by its pleasant and unique flavour. Food advertisements or meal packages, which students typically consume while hanging out with friends, have an impact on how people perceive the risks of consuming fast food. According to survey, there is moderately positive perception of the students.

**Keywords:** Perception, College Students, Risk Factor, Fast Food Consumption, Eating Habits

## INTRODUCTION

The fast food and junk food consumption is becoming the trend for the teenager or the college going student.<sup>1</sup> The low price, easy availability and the taste of the food makes more popular among the student. In colleges also there are various outlets where fast food is available.<sup>2</sup> The available of cold drink, packet chips, sandwiches, burger etc. this all food contains low nutritional level.<sup>3</sup> Moreover as (Labensky and *et al*) define fast food as “Food dispensed quickly at an inexpensive restaurant generally offering a limited menu of inexpensive items, many of which may not be particularly nutritious; the food can be eaten on premises, taken out or sometimes delivered.”<sup>4</sup>

Fast food nutritional diets are high in calories, sugar, and sodium, all of which contribute to body fat gain and have an impact on BMI (Body Mass Index).<sup>5</sup> Excessive fast food consumption can lead to obesity, gastrointestinal issues, high cholesterol, dietary inadequacies, heart illnesses, muscle loss, and other health problems.<sup>6</sup> Many people's lifestyles have altered dramatically as a result of growing urbanization and the emergence of modern,

cutting-edge technologies. Individuals' food habits have changed as a result of their changing lifestyles, resulting in malnutrition.<sup>7</sup>

Adolescents and young adults are reported to be more engaged in fast-food eating than other age groups.<sup>8</sup> Despite this, their hectic schedules, examination pressures, and time away from home expose them to high levels of stress, which leads to dietary irregularities. Fast foods are easy to prepare, convenient to obtain, reasonably inexpensive, and popular among people of all ages.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, they are often served in huge servings and include high levels of energy, sugar, and salt, as well as low micronutrient and fiber content. Several studies have found a variety of harmful consequences of fast-food intake, ranging from weight gain in children to an increased risk of diabetes.<sup>10</sup> Fast-food intake was also linked to obesity and central adiposity. Fast food consumption, on the other hand, contributes to a variety of lifestyle-related disorders.<sup>11</sup>

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The data gathering was place over the course of two weeks. Using non-probability convenient sampling, the investigator selected 230 samples of students who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria for data collection. Sumandeep Nursing College, Sanskar Education Trust, Sigma Institute of Nursing, and Pioneer Nursing College in Vadodara are places from where the investigator gathers information. The subject was chosen by the investigator to establish the report by stating the study's goal. Questionnaire began with a demographic tool, a Likert scale, and general questions. The students' perceptions of fast food intake are analysed.

#### **RESULTS:**

More than one-fifth of those polled (64.3%) were between the ages of 18 and 20, while 34.3% were between the ages of 21 and 23. 74.3 percent of responders (171) are female, while 26.7 percent are male (59). 28% of respondents are in their second year, 50% are in their third year, and 21% are in their fourth year; the majority are pursuing graduation. 2.6% of those polled are diploma students, 3.9% are postgraduate students, and 93.5% are undergraduate students. The 12.2% of participants are staying as paying guests, 49.6% are staying

at home, and 38.3% are staying in a hostel (**Table 1**).

Student's opinion of the danger factor of fast food intake is that they typically consume when hanging out with friends and are also influenced by food commercials or food packets. Students are aware that fast food is unhealthy and can lead to obesity, but the delicious and unique taste entices them. They also know that eating at home is the healthiest option because home cooking has fewer calories (**Table 2**).

Students eating habits are as follows: they are aware of the importance of a balanced diet, but they consume fried foods, cold drinks, and do not exercise. Some common healthy habits are that they consume fruits once a day, drink enough water (i.e. 8-12 glasses/day), and avoid eating too many sweets on a daily basis (**Table 3**).

**Table 4** it can be said that most (61 %) of the male and 50 percent of the female were healthy. Further about 25 percent of female were underweight and none of the males were found underweight. But as compared to females substantial percentage of male interviewed were overweight (female 9% & male 12%) or obese (female 17% & male 27%).

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of sample according to their demographic characteristic (N= 230)

SR NO.	FACTORS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	AGE		
	18-20	148	64.3
	21-23	79	34.3
	24-26	3	1.3
2	GENDER		
	Female	171	74.3
	Male	59	25.7
3	CLASS		
	Second Year	65	28.3
	Third Year	1160	50.4
	Fourth Year	49	21.3
4	EDUCATION		
	Diploma	6	2.6
	Postgraduate	9	3.9
	Undergraduate	215	93.5
5	RESIDENCE		
	As Paying Guest	28	12.2
	At Home	114	49.6
	At Hostel	88	38.3

Table 2: Frequencies of sample of Likert Scale that assess the perception on risk factor of fast food consumption (N= 230)

Sr. No	STATEMENT	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	You feel craving for fast food.	11	56	131	32
2.	You consume fast food atleast once a day.	21	101	89	19
3.	You think that fast food can cause obesity.	5	25	140	60
4.	You know fast food is having high calories in food.	6	36	130	58
5.	You usually overeat the food.	12	120	83	15
6.	You mostly consume fast food with your friends only.	5	59	139	27
7.	You feel that fast food saves your time.	22	97	97	14
8.	You know fast food can leads to hypertension.	5	44	50	50
9.	Mostly you eat fast food in evening.	11	87	107	25
10.	You believe fast food is unhealthy for your health.	4	24	130	72
11.	You consume fast food because it is cheaper.	25	109	84	12
12.	You like to eat home-made food.	0	14	143	73
13.	You gain weight by eating fast food.	19	66	108	37
14.	You eat fast food because of the delicious taste.	1	25	153	51
15.	You eat fast food just for passing time and entertainment.	13	98	100	19
16.	Often you suffer from constipation or diarrhoea.	23	88	97	23
17.	You gets early fatigue than others.	19	102	92	17
18.	You attract from advertisements of food or food Packet.	10	79	118	23
19.	Can you able to avoid fast food.	8	41	139	42
20.	You are addicted to fast food.	34	93	87	16

Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution table of Checklist assess the eating habits (N= 230)

Sr No.	Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Do you eat fast food everyday?	No	189	82.2
		Yes	41	17.8
2.	Do you eat fast food mostly in evening?	No	110	47.8
		Yes	120	52.2
3.	Do you usually have cold drinks?	No	137	59.6
		Yes	93	40.4

4.	Do you have atleast one regular meal in a day?	No	55	23.9
		Yes	175	76.1
5.	Do you eat fried food everyday?	No	180	78.3
		Yes	50	21.7
6.	Do you eat any fruit once a day?	No	81	35.2
		Yes	149	64.8
7.	Do you drink sufficient water everyday? (8-12 glasses/day)	No	51	22.2
		Yes	179	77.8
8.	Do you eat sweets everyday? (chocolate, ice-cream, dessert etc.)	No	166	72.1
		Yes	64	27.9
9.	Do you do exercise regularly	No	157	68.3
		Yes	73	31.7
10.	Do you know about balance diet?	No	44	19.1
		Yes	186	80.9

Table 4: Body Mass Index Interpretation

BMI value	Categories	F	%	M	%
Less than 18.5	Underweight	42	24.6	0	0
18.5-24.9	Healthy weight	85	49.7	36	61.0
25-29.9	Overweight	15	8.8	7	11.9
30 and above	Obese	29	17.0	16	27.1
All		171		59	

#### DISCUSSION:

The research tried to find out the perception of college students regarding the risk factors of fast-food and their eating habits of the selected college of Vadodara. Data were collect using the demographic data, Likert scale and checklist. There are total 230 samples collected from the selected colleges. The sampling technique in the study was non-randomized convenient sampling technique. SPSS research hypothesis H1 has accepted.

#### CONCLUSION:

This study was designed to assess college students' perceptions of risk factors associated with fast food consumption and their eating habits, and found that the majority of college students had positive perceptions. After assessing perceptions, the study concluded that they had positive perceptions. The correlation coefficient is

(0.1), indicating that this moderately positive correlation is usually between (0) and (1) for the outcome (0.1), thus the two positive relationship between the variables is fast food-consumer behavior and Eating Habits

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