



Prevalence of consumption of fast food among adolescents and its impact on their health (14-19 years)

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Abstract:

Adolescence is a very crucial period of life. The For proper growth and development proper food habits, nutrition is very important. But it is seen that due to change in life styles, eating patterns, fashion, advertisements etc. the consumption of fast food is become habit during this period. This study aims to study the prevalence of consumption of fast food among the adolescents of Nagpur city. Adolescents belongs to 14-19 years of age(N=123) was selected from Nagpur city by purposive sampling .A structured questionnaire and interview techniques were used to collect data. The results showed that consumption of fast food among adolescents (14-19 years) of Nagpur city is very high.

Key Words: Adolescents, Fast food, health.

Introduction :

Adolescence is a period of rapid growth and development .Nutrition needs are at the peak. Diet in this age has recursions on the future health. High intake of fat, salt, cholesterol are associated with heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, diabetes and obesity etc. Adolescents tend to enjoy soft drinks, breads, potato chips, popcorn, noodles, and ready to eat food. These foods are rich sources of carbohydrates, and low nutrient density. Fast food denotes food which is prepared and served quickly .Western fast food include chips, burgers, pizzas ,sandwiches, chicken nuggets, fish, ice-cream, French fries, bread etc.

Fast food comprises of anything that is quick, tasty, convenient and fashionable. Fast food advertising and the lure of convenience in addition to taste attracts adolescents to fast food addiction. The factors generally makes it popular are easy to prepare and ready to consume within no time. Taste factor, is another important reason to an extent that influences to opt for fast food. This taste is achieved owing to lavish usage of oils, salts and/or sugar, Attractiveness such as packing of such foods has very attractive appearance by adding food additives and colours in addition to enhancement in flavour, Advertising has a major role in attracting adolescents, to the junk food selling joints.

Adolescents constitute 21.2 percent of the total population of India, where malnutrition is an important public health problem among adolescents. Adolescence is a crucial period in a life. Health and nutritional status during this phase is critical for the physical maturity, which in turn influence the health of the offspring.

During Adolescence the proper nutrition is a need of an hour, as it is a very important age of physical maturity, reproductive functioning, particularly in girls due to menses etc.The nutritional demands during this period increases such as requirement of iron, calcium, vitamins, and proteins for maintaining physical as well as mental health. Health as defined by WHO (1948) is said to be a state of complete physical, social, mental as well being and not just the absence of disease or infirmities. Nutrition is an important avenue through which the indicators for good health can be achieved. This is because proper nutrition promotes a good nutritional status thus satisfies the requirement for good physical health.

Rao, et al (2006) , observed nutritional status of adolescent population in nine states of India. Results reveals 42% of girls were undernourished .A significant association between under nutrition and socio economic status parameters like family, size of land holding and occupation of head of household was observed.

Eating frequent fast food meals causes teens and young adults to gain more weight and face an increased risk of developing insulin resistance according to the results of a longitudinal study that followed over 3,000 young adults over a period of 15 years. Funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) and published in The Lancet, subjects who ate at fast-food restaurants more than twice each week compared to less than once a week had gained an extra ten pounds and had a two-fold greater increase in insulin resistance, a risk factor for type 2 diabetes. Diabetes is a major risk factor for heart disease.

21st Century has brought enormous changes in family structures and life style. Today, due to change in lifestyle, an adolescent is not concerning about the proper food consumption, required for their body. The regular consumption of junk food, fast food, cold drinks, preserved foods, chocolates, ice-creams, other than proper food is very common. The effects of consumption of these food is not very satisfactory may questioning the health problems in future especially on reproductive health of the adolescence girls.

Socio economic strata is known to be great determinant of health and nutritional status. According to WHO (2006) , the first factor is the adequate availability of food in terms of quantity as well as quality , which depends on socio economic strata, food practices , cultural traditions and allocation of food in the households. Low income families tend to either purchase less nutritious cheap food items as a means to cope with the situation or reduce intake of food. The less nutritious cheap food items will certainly not meet the nutritional requirement of the household particularly the vulnerable groups of which adolescents are included. Nutritional requirement increases during adolescent where females require 2200 Cal/day and all the other nutrients needed for the growth and development. Therefore, adolescent girls from the lower income families are more likely to have nutritional deficiencies than their peers.

Objectives of the study

This study has been undertaken with the following objectives.

- To check out prevalence of fast food among adolescents (14-20 years)of Nagpur city.
- To check out awareness of adolescents regarding adverse effect of more consumption of fast food on health.

Material and Methods

The study was undertaken to access the prevalence of consumption of fast food among adolescents (14-19 years) of Nagpur city.

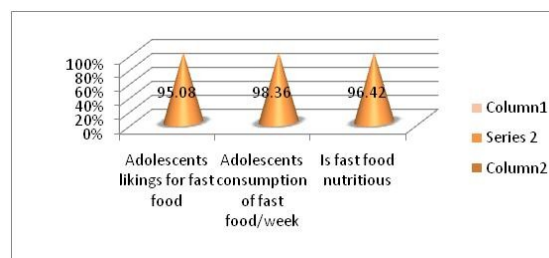
The data was collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected by structured questionnaire and interview techniques from the purposively selected adolescents of Nagpur City (N=123).

Secondary information was collected by, books, journals, newspapers, websites and college library. A sample of 61 adolescents belong to 14 to 19 years were selected randomly. The collected data was tabulated

and interpreted with the help of percentage method.

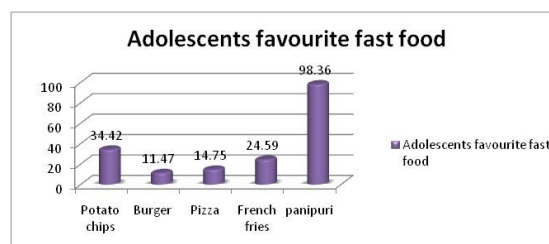
Results and discussion

Diagram 1.1 showing Opinion of Adolescents regarding fast food



From the above graph it is observed that 95.08% of adolescents like fast food very much. 96.42% adolescents think that fast food is very nutritious. 98.36% adolescents regularly consume fast food. It is seen that due to the attractive packaging, advertisements, taste, added colour etc. adolescents attracted towards the fast food. But it is also observed that they are not aware of the harmful effects of fast food on their health. Many researches showed that a short-term adverse effect of eating fast foods is lack of energy which occurs because fast foods don't provide essential nutrients, even though they can be very much sufficing, due to which one feels weakened. Unfortunately, meals consisting of fast food don't fill up for long. Because they are lacking in fibre, and are made of processed foods, they are rated high on the glycaemic index, which means they provide a quick rise in blood sugar, but this also falls quickly, and giving rise to hunger.

Diagram 1.2 showing Adolescents favourite fast food

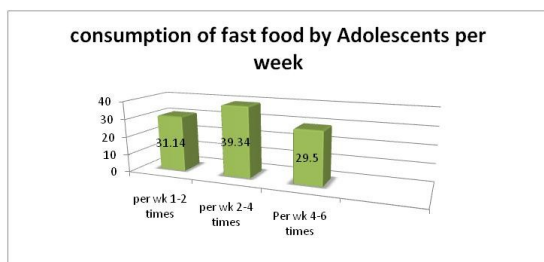


From the above graph we can come to the conclusion that Indian popular fast food that is panipuri (98.36%) is the most favourite fast food of the selected adolescents followed by potato chips (34.42%), French fries (24.59), pizza (14.75) and burger (11.47%) respectively. Pani puri was found adolescent's favourite fast food. Pani Puri's are absolutely bad for health. It's well known fact that Pani Puri is generally found unhygienic and contaminated. Puri's are being a fried item in oil is always having

harmful effects which you know very well. The one who serve is most of the time won't maintain hygienic condition while serving, if they do so doesn't match with required standards or of poor hygienic.

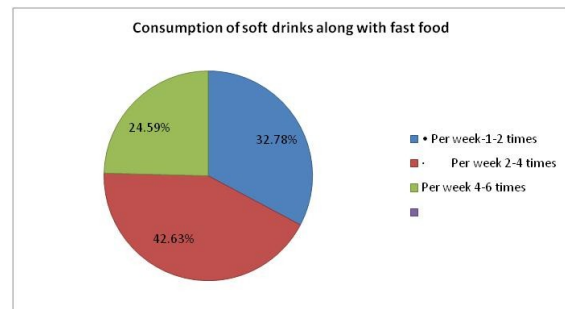
Eating habits in such age group not only has an impact on their growth but also on their concentration, feeling and behaviour. Such nutritionally weak foods become quickly addictive and can sow the seeds of infirmity and debilitating disease, which ultimately leads to many an incurable disease.

Diagram 1.3 showing consumption of fast food by Adolescents per week



The results of the study show that 31.14% adolescents consume fast food 1-2 times per week. 39.34% adolescents consume fast food 2-3 weeks per week and 29.50% adolescents consume fast food 4-6 times per week. In many cases, fast food is highly processed and contains large amounts of carbohydrates, added sugar, unhealthy fats and sodium. These foods are almost always high in calories while offering little in the way of nutrition. And when fast food frequently replaces nutritious whole foods in your diet, it can lead to all sorts of bad health outcomes. It may increase cancer risk, heighten risk of heart disease, memory and cognitive function will decline, constipation, bones could weaken; food dyes could make you sick lethargic or hyperactive etc.

Diagram 1.4 showing consumption of soft drinks along with fast food.



The study observed that drinking soft drinks along with fast food is also very common activity seen among adolescents. This study shows that 32.78% adolescents consume soft drinks with fast food 1-2 weeks. 42.63% adolescents consume soft drinks 2-4 times per week and 24.59% adolescents consume soft drinks 4-6 times per week. Frequent intake of soft drinks include soda can lead to poor oral health, says Leah Kaufman, MS, RD, CDN. Drinking large amounts of soda increases the amount of acid in your mouth, which eventually causes tooth decay and cavities.

Summary and conclusions

- Majority of the respondents were girls.
- Majority of the respondents were belonging to nuclear family.
- 42.63% adolescents consume fast food 2-4 times per week.
- 96.42% adolescents are aware that fast food is not good for health.
- 95.08% like fast foods.
- 98.36% adolescents eat fast foods. 98.36% adolescents like to eat pani puri, 34.42% adolescents like to potato chips, 24.59% adolescents like to eat French fries.
- 42.63% adolescents like to drink cold drink along with fast food.

As per the study carried out it can be concluded that consumption of fast food among adolescents (14-19 years) of Nagpur city is very high.

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