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Obesity and Hotel Industry

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ABSTRACT:

The main objective of this study is to map the prevalence of over- weight or obesity among the adolescents in Chennai and to identify the contributing factors for the obesity. We have chosen the adolescents of age group between 18-22 years. The impact of their sedentary life style, consumption of junk food and other unhealthy food is analysed. The role of hotel industry in increasing obesity among adolescence is discussed.

INTRODUCTION:

The Government of India established Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) in 1966 with the aim of establishing and operating hotels across India (The Aashok group, 2014). The rising BPO industry is also contributing to growth of the Hospitality Industry Nasscom (2013). The Indian hotel chains have diversified from being exclusive super deluxe chains to serving the middle and lower budget markets as well. Thus, Indian Hotels have evolved to be competitive, innovative and extremely guest focused and has been successful in establishing their place in global markets. The Indian Hotel chains are using latest marketing tools like on line marketing, social media marketing, Emails, direct marketing, travel agencies etc to compete in market (Sufi 2012). It is clear from the discussion that the Indian Hotel Industry is growing at fast rate.

As the number of eateries, hotels and street food outlets are increasing day by day, children, adolescents and young adulthoods are much affected. Due to the change in life style, sedentary work, Junk food and high calorie and fat foods and less of physical activities obesity is very common. National Family Health Survey conducted between 2019 and 2021 showed 6.4% of women and 4.0% of men of age group 15-49 were obese. The causes of obesity in India are aplenty. Obesity is emerging as a silent pandemic in India. Obesity leads to hypertension, diabetes, elevated cholesterol levels in the body and impaired glucose tolerance. The survey also predicts that obesity will be the largest health challenge for Indians in the coming years. The reason behind the alarming rate of overweight people in India as per the survey is largely due to certain socio-cultural factors.

The reasons for obesity differ among different communities and their habitats. The most common reasons behind obesity among urban populations and small cities and towns are:

- Change in food habits
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Lack of sleep
- Misconception in parenting
- Stress

Hence in the present study a survey was conducted among the male adolescent group of age 18-22 years. In the survey their sleep time, food habits, preference of food, play habit were analysed along with their personal details such as height and weight.

MATERIALS & METHODS:

Random sampling of 25 male members of age group 18-22 years were selected for the study. A questionnaire was prepared to collect their personal data such as age, weight, food habits, sleeping time, sedentary activities, their monthly income. Based on the data collection they were grouped to study the percentage of junk food eaters, untimely sleepers, and high fat and calorie eaters to assess the percentage of obesity in this age group. The study also revealed the role of eateries, street foods, pizza centres and hotels in increasing obesity among adolescent group.

RESULTS:

Among the adolescents (samples) taken for the study 18 of them were students and 7 were employed. Most of them had their family income >1 Lakh and 14 of them were single child in the family. 21 of them were non-vegetarians and only 4 were vegetarians. Majority of them skipped their break-fast and only took coffee or tea in the morning. All the 25 of them were doing only sedentary job of sitting in the class or sitting with the System in office for 8 hrs. During the lunch time 9 of them had quick meals in non-vegetarian hotels, 9 of them had only junk food such as noodles, pasta, parathas and only 7 of them had home food. The analyses revealed that 8 of them had pizza, burger ,wrap and Nan atleast 3-6 times in a month while 11 of them had it more frequently about 6-10 times in a month. Frequent Chicken biriyani eaters were the maximum among the samples. Most of them preferred street foods and a few were for hotel food. Their sleep cycle ranged from 1.00am to 8.00am. among the 25 taken for the survey only 8 of them went for Gymn class and others had no physical activities. The body weight of 21 of them ranged from 98-100kg while 4 of them were between 90-97kg. almost all of them were above 1.7meters.

DISCUSSION:

It is interesting to note that small hotels both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, street food, pizza centres, small outlets with only parathas, pasta and noodles have increased enormously in the last two decades. In early days all the family members had scheduled lunch time and dinner time, where there was systematic food habit. In the 20th century this socio-culture has seen a drastic change, resulting in untimely food. Since most of the ladies are employed, ordering food as per the desire of each family member has become very common. Thus outside food has emerged into the dining table of every family. Technology has improved to such an extent that they need not get the food from hotels. There are number of Apps such as Swiggy, Dunzo, Zepto which are easily accessible to even small children in the family. Payment mode is made all the more easier by credit cards, Paytm and Google pay. These are the main cause for the obesity from children to adult.

In the present study we have analysed the following causes for the obesity in adolescents. They are: their food habits, sedentary life style, lack of sleep, misconception in parenting and stress. The reason behind the alarming rate of overweight people in India as per the survey is largely due to certain socio-cultural factors. One of the prime causes of obesity in India is the changing adherence to unhealthy nutrition. In the last decade, people of all age groups have shown an inclination towards fatty food and processed food for the simple reasons such as easy availability of junk food, low cost of food, advertisements promoting processed food, addiction to the food because they please their taste buds. Survey showed that most of the food that the adolescents preferred viz., Naan was made from calorie rich white flour (300 calorie). Most of them ate from small outlets on the streets where ajenomoto which is a compound made from sodium and glutamic acid (MSG-Monosodium glutamate) is used in all preparations. This is considered to be harmful if taken in excess, which blocks the arteries. It adds taste to briyani, fried rice, noodles, lollypop chicken. The present survey shows that these are the favourite food of the adolescents. Similar studies carried out by Ranjani *et al*., (2016) agree with our results.

Sedentary life of sitting for 5-8 hrs with the system is another cause for obesity along with playing video games for more hours and watching you-tube and television. The present generation is an addict to these gadgets and it is difficult for their parents to control them. Moreover misconception in parenting plays a major role in obesity. They allow them to eat any junk food to satisfy their hunger and allow them to use the mobile and other gadgets without any control. This view is also supported by the survey conducted by Ranjani *et al*., (2016).

The most important stress that the adolescents undergo is due to lack of sleep. This study revealed that most of them went to bed only late night by 1.00am and got up from the bed by 8.00am. The overall lack of sleep among populations, the habit of staying awake until the wee hours of the night can also cause obesity in both adults and children. A good seven to eight hours of sleep at the right time is essential to regulate metabolism in your body. When there is a disruption in metabolism, it causes the irregular synthesis of hormones that can lead to certain conditions that eventually result in weight gain. Irregular metabolism is more than detrimental to the body and it can be regulated only with good sleep habits. Early to bed and early to rise is essential for physical and mental well-being (Samanta *et al*., 2022).

Thus the present project highlights the bad practices of adolescents in terms of food habits, sleep cycle, sedentary and absence of physical activities, absence of outdoor games and inclusion of indoor video games leading obesity. Emergence of numerous street foods has not only affected hotel industry, it has badly affected the health of adolescents.

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