A Descriptive Study to Assess Knowledge Regarding Health Hazards of Junk Food Among Nursing Students of Kailash Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Sciences, Greater Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar

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ABSTRACT :

Eating junk foods has emerged as a growing issue among teenagers, which has been a major cause of numerous health problems like obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases. Nursing students as future health professionals need to be well-versed with the health risks of junk foods to encourage healthy eating habits among the community. A descriptive research study was undertaken among 40 first-year B.Sc. Nursing students of Kailash Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Sciences, Greater Noida, with the aim to measure their knowledge towards health hazards of junk food. Data were gathered on a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher, consisting of 25 multiple-choice items. The findings of the study indicated that 32 (80%) students possessed moderate knowledge, 8 (20%) had sufficient knowledge, and none showed poor knowledge concerning health hazards of junk food. The total mean knowledge score was 16.8 with a standard deviation of 1.819. The results reflect the importance of repeated educational interventions to further improve awareness and adoption of healthier food choices among nursing students, and thus mitigate potential health hazards due to junk food consumption.

INTRODUCTION

The eating habits of a person have a great influence on his or her overall health and well-being. Junk food, typically defined as food rich in fat, sugar, and salt with low nutritional content, has now become a key feature of current dietary patterns, especially among young people and young adults. The rising intake of such foods is linked to many health hazards, such as obesity, heart diseases, diabetes, and other chronic illnesses.

Worldwide, the World Health Organization (WHO) has expressed alarm regarding the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases associated with unhealthy food habits. Nursing students who will be future healthcare professionals, as well as adolescents and young adults, are no exception to being attracted to junk foods. The frequency of junk food intake by nursing students is of specific concern since, as health professionals to be and caregivers, they are more likely to serve as role models and health promoters of healthy dietary habits. Insufficient knowledge or disregard of the health risks of junk food not only could affect their individual health but could also compromise their efficiency in advocating health lifestyles in their future practice.

Acknowledging this, the current research was conducted to evaluate the awareness of B.Sc. Nursing students about junk food health risks. The research sought to present evidence regarding the existing awareness among nursing students and highlight the importance of focused education interventions that could enable them to make well-informed dietary decisions and act as examples of healthy lifestyles for others.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Junk food consumption has become a global concern, particularly among adolescents and young adults, due to its significant impact on health. Numerous studies highlight the relationship between excessive intake of junk food and non-communicable diseases like obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disorders. Consumption of junk foods has been a concern worldwide, especially among adolescents and youths, because it has a tremendous effect on health. There are many studies that identify the link between excessive consumption of junk foods and non-communicable diseases such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular illnesses.

A Study Conducted by Narang R et al. (2019) performed a descriptive study to assess the effect of awareness campaigns on junk food consumption in adolescents. Results showed that educational interventions lowered the frequency of junk food consumption and encouraged dietary changes towards better health choices.

A Study Conducted by Patel P and Shah R (2017) in their study on nursing students observed that while students were familiar with theoretical hazards posed by junk food, their practice never caught up with that knowledge, indicating a behavioural-knowledge gap.

Mishra S et al. (2015) have analysed the role of junk food in adolescent health in urban communities and observed that regular intake was linked with raised levels of cholesterol and triglycerides, setting the stage for premature onset of cardiovascular disease.

Gupta A et al. (2013) conducted a cross-sectional study among Indian college students and reported that more than 70% of subjects consumed junk food at least three times a week, with convenience, taste, and peer pressure being the most popular reasons. The research showed a positive association between junk food intake and increasing BMI levels.

RESEARCH STATEMENT

"A study to assess knowledge on health hazards of junk food among B.Sc. Nursing students of Kailash Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Sciences, Greater Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar."

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the level of knowledge on health hazards of junk foods among B.Sc Nursing students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Research Approach:** Quantitative approach.
- **Research Design:** Descriptive research design.
- **Setting:** Kailash Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Sciences, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.
- **Population:** B.Sc. Nursing students.
- **Target Population:** B.Sc. Nursing 1st-year students of Kailash Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Sciences.
- **Accessible Population:** B.Sc. Nursing 1st-year students present on the day of data collection.
- **Sample Size:** 40 students.
- **Sampling Technique:** Non-probability purposive sampling technique.

DEVELOPMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOLS

- **Tool Description:**
  - **Section I: Demographic variables** (age, gender, residence, parents' education, parents' occupation, family income, type of family, number of children, pocket money, frequency and reasons for eating junk food, place of consumption, companions, prior knowledge, and source of knowledge).
  - **Section II: Structured questionnaire** consisting of 25 multiple choice questions on knowledge regarding health hazards of junk food.
- **Scoring:**
  - Correct answer: 1 mark
  - Incorrect answer: 0 mark
  - Knowledge levels:
    - 0-50%: Inadequate knowledge
    - 51-75%: Moderate knowledge
    - 76-100%: Adequate knowledge
- **Tool Development:** Constructed based on literature review and expert inputs. Validated by faculty members and piloted before full-scale use.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Section I - Demographic characteristics of sample

Demographic characteristrics		Frequency	Percentage
1) Age in years	17 years	0	00.0%
	18 years	10	25.0%
	19 years	21	52.5%
	20 years	09	22.5%
2) Gender	Male	8	20.0%

	Female	32	80.0%
3)Residential area	City	34	85.0%
	Village	6	15.0%
4)Educational status of Father	Uneducated	0	0.0%
	Primary school	1	2.5%
	Secondary school	20	50%
	Graduate	19	47.5%
5)Educational status of Mother	Uneducated	0	0.0%
	Primary school	3	7.5%
	Secondary school	23	57.5%
	Graduate	14	35%
6) Occupation of father	Government	18	45%
	Private	12	30%
	Business	7	17.5%
	Agriculture	3	7.5%
7)Occupation of Mother	Government	4	10%
	Private	4	10%
	Business	1	2.5%
	Housewife	31	77.5%
8) Family income per month.	Rs 10,000 – 25,000	9	22.5%
	RS 25,000 – 50,000	15	37.5%
	Rs 50,000 –Rs 75,000	13	32.5%
	Above 75,000	3	7.5%
9)Type of family	Nuclear	32	80%
	Joint	8	20%
10) Total number of children in family.	One	2	5%
	Two	23	57.5%
	Three	15	37.5%
11)Pocket money per month.	Rs 5,000 -1,000	34	85.0%
	Rs 1,000 – 3,000	6	15.0%
	Above 3,000	0	0.0%

12)The frequency of eating junk food	**Nil**	**10**	**25%**
	1-3 time a week	**25**	**62.5%**
	More than 3 times	**2**	**5.0%**
	Daily	**3**	**7.5%**
13)Reason to eat junk food.	**Timepass**	**15**	**37.5%**
	Craving	**25**	**62.5%**
	Peer pressure	**0**	**0.0%**
14) From where do you consume junk food.	**Home**	**6**	**15%**
	College Canteen	**7**	**17.5%**
	Online services	**3**	**7.5%**
	Fast food corner	**24**	**60%**
15)Whom would you like to eat junk food with.	**Alone**	**4**	**10%**
	Peer group	**13**	**32.5%**
	Family	**13**	**32.5%**
	No preference	**10**	**25%**
16) Have you obtained any previous information regarding junk food.	**Yes**	**26**	**65%**
	No	**14**	**35%**
17) Do you think junk food is bad for you.	**Yes**	**31**	**77.5%**
	No	**0**	**0.00%**
	Not to say	**9**	**22.5%**
18)Source of previous information regarding health hazards of junk food through.	**Mass media**	**15**	**37.5%**
	Friends and relatives	**04**	**10%**
	Health professionals	**16**	**40%**
	Family members	**05**	**12.5%**

Table 1. Distribution of sample according to demographic variable.

Section II:-Analysis of knowledge score regarding health hazards of junk food among nursing students.

A - Assessment of knowledge score regarding health hazards of junk food among nursing students

Level of knowledge	**SCORE INTERPRETATION**	
Level of knowledge **Inadequate knowledge**	**Score**	
	Frequency	**Percentage**
Inadequate knowledge	0	0%

Moderate knowledge	32	80%
Adequate knowledge	08	20%
TOTAL	40	100%

Table 2. Score Interpretation of Knowledge Scores.

B- Analysis of knowledge score regarding particular question

This section deals with the distribution of questions prepared to assess the knowledge regarding health hazards of junk food among nursing students.

Stuructured Questionarrie		Frequency	Percentage
1) Mention your email Junk food means	A . Foods having low or no nutritive value	35	87.50%
	B . Food that is costly and pleasant to taste	5	12.50%
	C . Food that is highly nutritious.	0	0.00%
2) Junk food contains	A . High fibre vitamins and minerals	0	0.00%
	B . High carbohydrates and proteins	1	2.50%
	C .High level of fat ,salt and sugar	39	97.50%
3) Calorific value of carbohydrate is	A .4 kcal 1 gm	24	60.00%
	B .6 kcal 1 gm	8	20.00%
	C .9 kcal 1 gm	8	20.00%
4) In Indian diet carbohydrate constitute the following percentage of total energy intake	A .40%-60%	13	32.50%
	B .60%-80%	23	57.50%
	C .80%-100%	04	10.00%
5) Excess of fat gained due to junk food causes except	A . Obesity	20	50.00%
	B . peptic ulcer	12	30.00%
	C . Coronary heart disease	08	20.00%
6)Following of which is present abudantly in junk food	A . Sugar	3	7.50%
	B . Fats	36	90.00%
	C . Fiber	1	2.50%
7)The junk food are mainly made from	A . Wheat flour	0	0.00%
	B . White flour (Maida)	39	97.50%
	C . Multi grain flour	1	2.50%
8)Which of the following is harmful affect of continuous consumption of	A .Osteoporosis	24	60.00%
	B .Skin disease	05	12.50%

soft drinks	C .Weakness	11	27.50%
9)Excessive use of chewing gum leads to	A . Intestinal blockage	29	72.50%
	B . Vomiting	11	27.50%
	C .Fever	0	0.00%
10) Hazardous material in noodle are	A . Wax	19	47.50%
	B . Cooper	6	15.00%
	C . Zinc	15	37.50%
11)The body system mainly affects by burger and fresh fries in	A . Digestive system	39	97.50%
	B . Respiratory system	01	2.50%
	C . Skeletal system	0	0.00%
12)Frequent consumption of junk food leads to	A .Addiction	27	67.50%
	B .Giddiness	04	10.00%
	C .Vomiting	09	22.50%
13)The presence of harmful substance in deep fried item is	A .Acrylamide	19	47.50%
	B. Chilly powder	07	17.50%
	C .Malathione	14	35.00%
14)The most common health hazard of Junk food on physical health	A .Headache	0	0.00%
	B .Increased body weight	40	100.00%
	C .Skin rash	0	0.00%
15)The component that junk food lacks	A .Fiber	35	87.50%
	B .Sugar	2	5.00%
	C .Fats	3	7.50%
16)Bakery goods and salty snacks have	A .Plenty of calories	36	90.00%
	B .Good nutritional values	04	10.00%
	C .High amount of fiber	0	0.00%
17)The amount of calories found in pizza	A .110 kcal	05	12.50%
	B .120 kcal	14	35.00%
	C .140 kcal	21	52.50%
18) Which of the following is the health effect of phosphoric acid in soft drinks.	A .Kidney stone	22	55.00%
	B .Diabetes	07	17.50%

	C .Heart diseases	11	27.50%
19) Why is junk food appealing for many people?	A . It is very cheap to buy.	1	2.50%
	B .It is full of flavor and satisfies cravings	30	75.00%
	C .It is colorful and attractive	09	22.50%
20)The health hazards of repeated use of same oil for frying is	A .Fever	0	0.00%
	B .Back pain	2	5.0%
	C .Stomach pain	38	95.00%
21)The central government of India banned nationwide sales of which product due to presence of lead in iy	A .Ching Chinese	04	10.00%
	B .Maggi	36	90.00%
	C .Patanjali aata noddle	0	0.00%
22)The junk food that directly affects brain functioning	A .Food high in trans fat	07	17.50%
	B .Sugar drink	08	20.00%
	C .Both a and b	25	62.50%
23)A effect of unhealthy enviornment and harmful ingredients in preparing fast food leads to	A .Muscle pain	1	2.50%
	B .Fever	0	0.00%
	C .Ingestion and diarrhoea	9	97.50%
24))The psychological effect of junk food is	A .Learning difficulty	10	25.00%
	B .Sleep disturbance	17	42.50%
	C .Giddiness	13	32.50%
25)Do you check the quality of junk food	A .Yes	06	15.00%
	B .No	06	15.00%
	C .Sometimes	28	70.00%

Table 3. Distribution of sample according to knowledge regarding junk food.

C. Analysis of Knowledge score regarding health hazards of junk food, in terms of mean and Standard deviation

The analysis shows the mean value of 16.8 and standard deviation of 1.819

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that the majority of nursing students had moderate knowledge about junk food's health hazards, with 80% scoring in the moderate category and 20% in the adequate category. Factors such as urban residence, parental education, and exposure to health information contributed to better

knowledge scores. The findings emphasize the need for regular health education interventions to improve awareness and reduce junk food consumption among young adults.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that while nursing students showed awareness of junk food's health hazards, gaps remain in comprehensive knowledge. Structured educational programs can bridge these gaps and promote healthier eating patterns, potentially reducing the risk of lifestyle-related diseases in the future.

KEYWORDS

- Junk food
- Health hazards
- Adolescents
- Nursing students
- Knowledge assessment
- Eating habits
- Lifestyle diseases

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