



A STUDY ON DIETARY PATTERN OF LOW INCOME FAMILIES

¹Ms. Asma Farheen, ¹Head of the Department,
¹Department of Nutrition and Dietetics,
¹Islamia Degree and PG College, Hyderabad, India

Abstract: A study on "Analysing dietary pattern of Low-income families" was done in the year 2017. Low income families are primarily working families with income less than twice the federal poverty level. The objective of the study was to describe the socio-economic, demographic and lifestyle characteristics with dietary patterns among low-income families. The survey method was done where the pre-set questionnaire was used to collect data about general information, dietary information and 24-hour dietary recall, which was used to estimate average nutrients intake. The mean, standard deviation of nutrients were calculated and t-test was performed. 50 men and 50 women were selected from Ramnaspura and Asmangadh localities. Random sampling measure was adopted to collect data. From the survey, it was found that 54% of samples consume only 2 meals/day, 71% of them skip meals weekly twice, 47% don't consume chapatti, 53% of them consumed fruits occasionally, 54% don't consume milk and its products, 98% of them consume fleshy foods occasionally, 90% don't consume dry fruits, 75% of them don't consume junk food, 98% consume tea before meals(early morning) which make them to skip breakfast, 39% of them smoke small beedis and 64% of subjects consume paan/supari; 20% of them have history of hypertension, diabetes mellitus etc while rest 80% developed de-novo health issues like obesity(due to high rice consumption), micronutrient deficiencies etc. Among the nutrients, energy, proteins, fat and calcium intake were less compared to RDA. From the survey it was concluded that majority of the low-income families consume more rice, skip meals due to high tea consumption and consume very less fruits, chapatti, dry fruits, fleshy foods. Lastly participants were educated regarding healthy eating habits and were encouraged to avoid excess rice and tea consumption. They were recommended to include cheap and easily available foods like green, soybean, rajma, seasonal fruits and vegetables, jaggery, buttermilk etc.

Index Terms – Low income, Dietary pattern, Poverty, Breakfast.

INTRODUCTION

Low-income families means families whose annual income does not exceed 80 percent of the City, county or regional median income as determined from time to time by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The importance of a balanced diet can't be emphasized enough for a healthy lifestyle. A healthy lifestyle can be attained by maintaining a balanced diet and keeping into consideration to meet all the essential nutrients required by the body. A proper meal plan helps to attain ideal body weight and reduce the risk of chronic diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular and other types of cancer.

NEED OF THE STUDY.

The balanced diet plays an important role in diet of every individual irrespective of their financial status, but most of the times poverty of low income families restrict people to purchase food items and this can make them deprived of a balanced diet. This study focus on assessing the nutritional status and dietary patterns of low income families and to educate them about the importance of balanced diet.

Population and Sample

RESEARCH APPROACH: Descriptive study

SELECTION OF AREA: A cross-sectional study was done from different homes of Ramnaspura locality, near Nehru Zoological Park, Bahadurpura & Asmangadh, Hyderabad.

SELECTION OF SAMPLE: Low-income families comprising of father, mother and children were included in the study.

SIZE OF SAMPLE: Through random sampling, 100 subjects who belong to low-income groups were selected for the survey.

DURATION OF THE STUDY: The study has been carried for a period of two months i.e., during the month of February, 2017 to April, 2017

Data and Sources of Data

COLLECTION OF DATA: The content of questionnaire contains general information, dietary lifestyle information and 24 hour-dietary recall of the subject. The questionnaire contains both open ended and close ended questions.

General information: It was collected to get the following details like personal information of respondent's via name, age, gender, occupation, number of family members.

Dietary assessment method: The 24-hour dietary recall method is used to find dietary intakes and food habits. The effects of poor socio-economic lifestyle and dietary practices were included in questionnaire to assess the dietary pattern of subjects. Each subject was interviewed about the dietary pattern and asked to fill up the sheet for 1 day.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

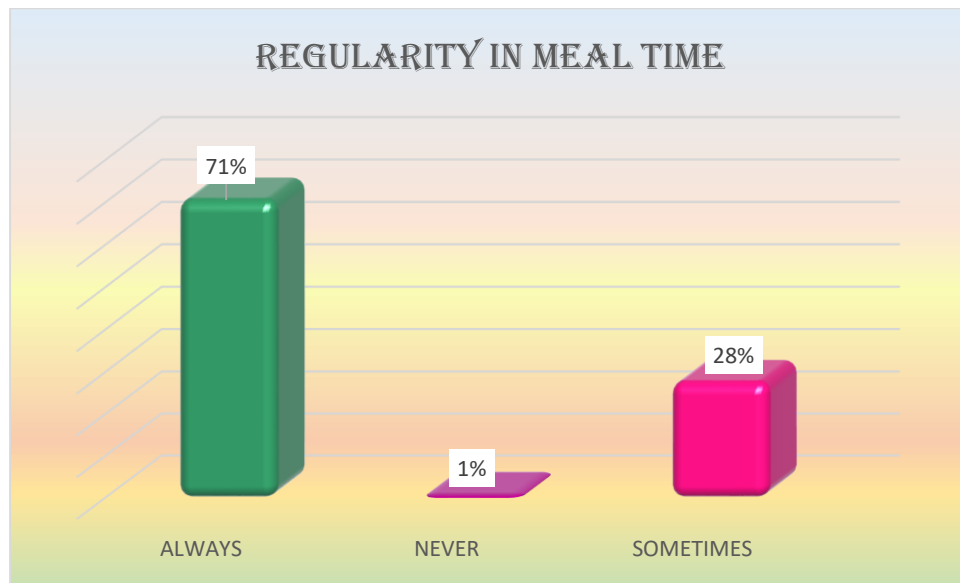
Study was conducted on the "Dietary pattern of low-income families" and 100 samples were selected for the study from different homes of Ramnaspura locality and few samples were also collected near Asmangadh area. A survey was conducted via the pre-set questionnaire which was prepared based on the questions including the general information and dietary assessment of the samples. Most of the subjects were non-vegetarian i.e 98 %. It was found that 71% of the subjects always maintain regularity in meal time. Around 54% of them consume only 2 meals/day. Many of the subjects i.e 71% of them were found to skip meals, weekly twice, due to lack of time as they tend to be busy in their jobs. It was found that most of the subjects i.e 47% of them don't consume chapati as it is slightly costly when compared to rice and also takes more time for preparation. 54% of subjects were found to consume 4 servings of rice/day. Majority of the subjects (99%) were found to consume dhal, out of which 51% of them consume dhal alternately and usually 1 serving of dhal. All the subjects consumed ½ serving of GLV's among which spinach, amaranth and amaranth were found to be consumed weekly and occasionally. 53% consumed fruits occasionally, out of which the most commonly consumed are orange and tomato. Only 66% of them think that it is important to include fruits and vegetables in daily diet, but can't include due to low budget for food. 54% of them don't include milk and its products in their diet; and the remaining 46% consume curd and buttermilk occasionally. 98% of subjects were found to consume fleshy foods occasionally. Only egg and beef were consumed on daily basis and mutton was found to be never consumed because of its high cost. Majority of the subjects i.e 90% don't consume dry fruits as they are costly and 75% of them were found to not eat outside junk food, as they totally depend on regular meals for hunger. Frequency of consumption of outside was occasionally due to reasons like its taste, cheaply available, no desire to cook at home sometimes etc. Majority of the subjects (98%) were found to consume tea and that too before meals (in early morning). Usually they prefer to add only 1 tsp of sugar in tea. 53% of subjects were found to drink only 3 glasses of water/day i.e only after their meals and not in between two meals. Most of the subjects were found to consume 15-30 kg of rice/month as it is provided through PDS by Govt. Around 47% of subjects consume 5 litres of oil/month. 39% of them smoke small beedis during their work hours for mental relaxation. 64% of subjects consume anar/supari for good mouth feel and digestion. 20% of subjects were found to have history of hypertension, DM and thyroid problems while the remaining 80% of them developed de novo health issues like obesity, micronutrient deficiencies etc. Through the results of statistical analysis, it was found that the mean values of nutrients such as energy, protein, fat and calcium were considerably less than the values given by ICMR.

My findings provide evidence on the high consumption of rice, skipping of meals due to high a consumption and very low consumption of fruits, dry fruits, chapati and fleshy foods. Through the study it can be concluded that most of the low-income families were habituated of consuming energy-dense or starchy foods. Though most of them are aware that it is important to include fruits and vegetables in diet, they can't consume it because of its high cost and their low-incomes. Tea has become an important component of the dietary pattern of rural population. The growing widespread use of simple CHO's (rice) daily and avoidance of fibre rich foods among low-income subjects is of concern due to high energy intake and low vitamins and mineral intake which may cause obesity related chronic diseases, like hypertension, DM, gastro-intestinal disturbances, malnutrition etc. Community based nutrition, education intervention programs targeting the eating behaviour of poorer population are urgently needed. Finally, government legislation is needed to regulate the marketing of fibre rich and fleshy foods and to eliminate beedis, cigarettes, alcohol and tobacco chewing consumption. Lastly, after the survey, participants were educated regarding the healthy eating habits and was encouraged to avoid excess rice and tea consumption.

SUGGESTION:- It was suggested them to follow a well balanced diet from locally available healthy food items like rajma, soybean in substitution of fleshy foods. They were encouraged to consume GLV's on daily basis. Sugar can be substituted with jaggery which is readily available, cheap and healthier than sugar. To prevent micronutrient deficiencies, they were suggested to consume seasonal fruits like mango, guava, grapes which will be cheap and readily available. Cheap and healthy foods like garlic, amla, curd, buttermilk, sweet potatoes were suggested to them.

Table 1 REGULARITY IN MEAL TIME

Options	Percentage %
Always	71
Never	01
Sometimes	28



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

It is my honored privilege to acknowledge my profound gratitude to all those eminent people who have given their valuable contribution without which this project would not have been completed. I deem it a great pleasure to have an opportunity to take up this project work on "A study on prevalence and nutritional assessment of overweight and obese individual associated with diabetes mellitus.

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