Nutritional Status of School-going Children and Adolescents- A Comparative Approach

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Abstract

Nutritional status of school going children and adolescents is mainly influenced by their nutritional intake. Their nutritional status has a sufficient impact on their cognition, health, performance and educational achievements. The objective of the study was to evaluate the nutritional status of the school going students living in the capital territory of Pakistan. The targeted groups were adolescent girls and school going children of age 12-17 and 6-10 years respectively with 200 sample size. A cross sectional study design was implemented. Anthroprometric, clinical and dietary data using food frequency questionnaire was obtained. The results of age group 6-10 years were satisfying. 95% and 60% of the students were having normal weight and height respectively when compared with the reference ranges of percentile charts of weight, height, age and growth charts of Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and National Center of Health Statistics (NCHS). The remaining 2.5% each were either underweight or overweight. 37.5% were having height more than average and 2.5% were stunted. On the other hand, the results of the adolescent girls were devastating. Only 38% of the girls were having normal BMI. 53% and 9% of them were lying in the underweight and overweight category of BMI respectively. Other variables like age, household income, medical history, meal skipping, sleep cycle, food consumed as most favorite, intake of nutritional supplements and energy levels were also obtained by using the pre-designed questionnaire.

Conclusion & Significance: It was concluded that most of the pre-adolescents were having good nutritional status with better IQ levels, active participation and good performance. However, the adolescent girls were lying with poor nutritional status, decreased nutrient intake, meal skipping and lack of proper sleep. This also make them susceptible towards greater risk of medical complications in their adulthood.

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Biography

Hina Zulfiqar has just done her Doctor of Dietetics and Nutritional Sciences from The University of Lahore, Pakistan. She had previously worked as a dietitian in Capital Hospital, Pakistan. Now she is working as an online consultant dietitian. She is very motivated to do research studies in developing and under developed countries especially Pakistan as it has a very least published data. She is also willing to highlight the nutritional problems found in the general public.

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