Abstract

FOOD HABITS OF INSTITUTIONALIZED AND NON-INSTITUTIONALIZED ELDERLY OF SURAT CITY, GUJARAT, INDIA

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Introduction:
Well-being of elderly has been mandated in the National Policy for Senior Citizens (2011). Nutrition plays a critical role in healthy ageing. There are various factors which affect the dietary intake of the elderly compromising their health and well-being. The living arrangement of the elderly is one of the factors affecting their well-being.

Objectives:
The present study explored the foods consumption pattern among elderly dwelling in community with family (non-institutionalized) and dwelling in old age homes (institutionalized).

Methodology:
A cross-sectional study was undertaken with two-stage stratified random sampling for selection of 1000 participants from non-institutionalized and institutionalized elderly residing in Surat city, Gujarat.

Results: The study showed that a significantly higher percentage of non-institutionalized (63.0%) elderly consumed fried foods such as samosa, kachori, bhajia, although occasionally, as compared to institutionalized (30.8%) elderly ($p<0.001$). Two-fifth of the non-institutionalized elderly were consuming junk foods such as pizza, burger, etc occasionally as compared less than one-tenth of the institutionalized elderly ($p<0.001$). Biscuits, wafers and other dry fried snacks such as *chevda*, *sev*, were also consumed by significantly higher proportion of non-institutionalized (68.6%, 56.8%, 65.6%) elderly as compared to institutionalized (54.5%, 38.4%, 36.0%) elderly ($p<0.001$).

Conclusion: High-calorie, non-nutritious junk foods were consumed more among non-institutionalized elderly. This might be probably because of irregularity in procuring and preparing food in the family living set-up as compared to fixed regime in institutions. There is a need to create awareness about healthy diets and ensure easy access to ready-to-eat nutritious foods for elderly.