

Nutritional Behaviour is a Social Problem in the Modern Lifestyle

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to observe, analyze, compare and educate young people's dietary behaviour. It was noticed that the consumption of fruits and vegetables is low, restricted in many cases to one or two servings per day. This result led to the conclusion that healthy food does not play an important role in young people's eating habits. Given this situation, in a few years, childhood obesity rates could rise alarmingly.

The nutrition factors contemplated were: the motivation of young people for a healthy diet; the information they possess about correct nutrition habits and their attitudes for a healthy lifestyle.

Keywords: Food, fruits and vegetables, young population, nutrition education, healthy habits.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study reveals that for most people, the concept of "healthy feeding" equals natural eating products which ensure sufficient nutrients and balanced caloric intake. The energy delivered by vegetables and fruits is necessary for the normal functions of the body, so it is desirable to cultivate children's tastes for these nutrients.

The purpose of this study is to observe, analyze, compare and educate the nutritional behaviour of young people from several age groups. The subjects of this research were young people because the relationship between age and nutrition is significant for a healthy body and for identifying what is essential for children to know about correct nutrition [1].

Nutrition education has three critical components: a motivational phase, an action phase, and an environmental component. Good food is essential for young people because they are at the age when it is necessary to have enough nutrients for a healthy body and brain development. Unfortunately, children prefer to eat sweets or fast food to the detriment of healthy food like vegetables and fruits.

Multiple nutrition factors have been taken into consideration, such as: the motivation of young people for a healthy diet; the information they possess about right nutrition and their attitudes for a healthy lifestyle. It is known that parents can influence the development of their children's behavioural skills [2].

The success of achieving a correct nutrition depends on parents' attitude towards food, because it

is necessary to make smart decisions about what children should eat, and to apply them in real life. Children's education on healthy food is something that in our culture does not get enough attention. It is vital to educate young people's behaviour to consume natural foods, vegetables, fruits, and to change their preference for fast food or sweets. This study aimed to raise awareness about healthy eating behaviours among the young population and to promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables [3].

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present research on the nutritional behaviour in children and young people focus on an inductive research strategy. The target group is separated into three categories: children aged between 10-12 years old (87 persons), teenagers aged between 13-15 years old (80 persons) and young people aged between 20-22 years old (94 persons). To achieve the goals of this study, three steps have been followed:

1. Students filled in a questionnaire (with 30 objective items) about their nutritional habits and their lifestyle (activities, sports and leisure);
2. The questionnaire responses given by children and young people were analyzed;
3. Educational material about correct feeding was presented, followed by a discussion on this topic. Moreover, for correct qualitative evaluation, three focus group discussions were held (organized by age).

The groups discussed topics regarding the consumption of foods and drinks and how different types of food can influence our life (food has healthy or harmful effects on the human body).

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The data was analyzed using the age of children and young people as an explanatory variable to study phenomena that are specific to different generations of people. It is known that in different age groups emerge multiple opinions, physiological changes, different life experiences, etc., all of which gave us specific "Age effects" [4].

3. Results and discussions

The data obtained during the study were processed on a computer using the STATISTICA for Windows software system (version 6.01).

The array of initial data for our work is consist of two indicators, one that describes the biological and socio-demographic characteristics of the subjects while the second that is obtained by psychodiagnostic methods. It was prepared so that it was possible to compare the entire available set of information in the analyzed groups and subgroups of different levels [5].

For data processing, nonparametric statistics methods were used, since the main indicators studied are qualitative. We considered the criterion of the statistical reliability of the findings to be $p < 0.05$, generally accepted in medical psychology. The method of regression analysis was also used.

The study aims to identify and typologize the relationship between eating styles and the psychological characteristics of women and men with nutritional obesity.

The object of this study is clients of weight loss programs that have a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to $30 \text{ kg} / \text{m}^2$ and do not have endocrine diseases, and patients suffering from alimentary obesity.

The subject of the study is the relationship between styles of eating behaviour, psychological characteristics, eating habits in the parent family and reactions to the current family situation.

During the study, the following hypotheses were tested:

- 1) each of the styles of eating behaviour is interconnected with certain aspects of perfectionism, impulsivity and certain personality traits of subjects with obesity;
- 2) there are significant differences in the severity of social prescribed perfectionism, nutritional features in parent 's family between a group of obese subjects and a group of subjects with the normal weight between men and women;

Let us evaluate the significance of differences between indicators of eating behaviour in the main and control groups. Since the main group of subjects and the comparison group are independent groups, and the distribution of indicators on the scales of eating behaviour is different from normal, we will choose the Mann Whitney criterion P to assess the significance of differences (see Table 1).

Since it was found that the differences between subjects with obesity and subjects with normal weight are reliable on all three scales of the Dutch nutritional questionnaire; which measures the restrictive, emotiogenic, external styles of eating behaviour.

The scales of the questionnaire themselves are independent of each other; we can conclude that styles of eating behaviour can serve as the basis for creating a typology of psychological characteristics of obese clients [6].

Table 1: Comparison of the significance of differences in the indicators of eating behaviour styles for the main and control groups according to the Mann Whitney criterion (the marked criteria are significant at the level of $p < 0.05000$)

Styles of eating behaviour	The number of observations. in the group of tests	The number of observations. in the group of control	Arithmetic mean on the SPP scales		I crit	p-level
			1 gr	2 gr		
limited	94	94	2.56	2.07	4.24339	0.000
emotional	94	94	2.45	1.63	5.76463	0.000
external	94	94	3.20	2.87	3.40570	0.000

Thus, the differences between the group of subjects with obesity and a group of subjects with normal weight are reliable on a scale.

"Restrictive eating behavior" at $p < 0.000$, on a scale.

"Emotiogenic eating behavior" at $p < 0.000$, on the scale of "External eating behavior" at $p < 0.000$.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Taking into consideration all the three dimensions of the definition of "nutrition" and based on our research results, the following conclusions can be drawn: According to the answers given by the young people tested, consumption of fruits and vegetables is low, in many cases once or twice per day. This result led to the conclusion that healthy foods do not play a central role in their diet; they prefer to consume chips, sweets, roasted meat or fast food. Given this situation, in a few years, childhood obesity rates could rise alarmingly. Blom-Hoffman *et al.* implemented a "program focused on increasing fruit and vegetable knowledge and vegetable consumption during school lunch"; a similar program may be necessary for our country too.

About similar "Age effects"- most children, teenagers and young people are tempted to eat a lot of sweets and fast food, which results in increased rates of obesity in the adolescent population [7].

Following the presentation of educational materials, filling in worksheets on the food pyramid and discussions with children, young people and their parents about correct nutrition, they are provided with new information that will prove useful in daily life.

Nevertheless, many characteristics of food habits were hard to quantify, thus making it difficult to evaluate whether all goals have been met. Perhaps the most important result was to determine the young people involved in this survey to change their unhealthy eating habits [8].

The health of the population can be maintained only if our young generation increases the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, rather than canned food, to which sweeteners, colouring agents and preservatives have been added. Moreover, the study emphasized the necessity of changing the eating habits of children and

young people. It is possible by introducing courses on healthy eating; such courses, to be taught only by professional nutritionists, should be attended by both children and parents. In this way, we could cultivate the taste of the young generation for fruits and vegetables because it is known that natural products are healthier than industrially processed products [9].

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