



ISSN: 2395-7476
IJHS 2021; 7(2): 121-123
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www.home-science-journal.com
Received: 25-04-2021
Accepted: 27-05-2021

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Study on knowledge and attitude of local students and students in hostel /PG (18-29 years) living in Vadodara city on home-based cooking practices and its impact on nutrient intake

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22271/23957476.2021.v7.i2b.1157>

Abstract

The presented study had a focus on knowledge and attitude of home and hostel-based cooking practices in students aged 18-29 years on how the knowledge of cooking had an impact on the eating habits and the importance of family involvement in the same. Subjects were selected using snowball sampling technique. Important findings of the study were, majority of the subjects who knew how to cook were females in both home (67.16%) and hostel-based (69.23%) settings. Taste of the food (38%) followed by other reasons like feasibility, interest, knowledge etc. (32.50%) and lack of time (25%) were the major factors which facilitated ordering food from outside. The results also showed that, full meals were preferred by majority (49%) followed by ready to eat (25%) and the least preferred were snacks (17.50%) for hostel-based students while ordering outside food. For students staying at home, majority of the subjects (98.50%) liked the taste of home-made and they cooked a perfect meal when they were hungry. Ordering food from outside was least preferred (16.50%). Students showed positive attitude towards learning to cook and improving their basic cooking skills. Students showed positive attitude towards will to learn cooking, due to taste enhancement and healthier option of cooking by self.

Keywords: cooking, cooking perceptions, healthy food, nutrients, gender bias, home-based cooking, hostel based cooking

Introduction

“The way to someone’s heart is through his/her stomach” a famous quote by Ian Somerhalder originally meant cooking a delicious dish for people and feeding them can easily win hearts of people. Ironically nowadays with decreased cooking trends at home and increased intake of junk food, processed foods, stomach is still the way to his/her heart but in the form of cardiovascular diseases!

Cooking has historically been an informal process carried out in home or around a shared fire that can be enjoyed by all members of the family, but in many cultures, women bear primary responsibility for cooking. Home-superior cooking is nutritional quality can thus play a role in preventing diet related chronic disease. Cooking at home ensures that we and our family consume fresh, nutritious foods. Home cooking can also make us feel better by boosting our vitality, maintaining our weight, improving our sleep, and lowering our stress levels. ^[1] Dietary practices in hostel has adverse effects on a lot of aspects especially when the growth and body transformation is at its peak.

As per WHO in 2016, more than 1.9 billion adults aged 18 years and above were overweight globally and 650 million adults were obese due to vivid factors one of which was reduced cooking at home and unhealthy dietary habits. Approximately 2.8 million deaths are reported as a result of being overweight or obese ^[2].

A survey was conducted in New Delhi regarding frequency of preparing western dishes at home and a report was published for the same. Over 1000 subjects were selected for the survey comparing 14 Indian cities. Results showed that there was an increased consumption and preparation of western foods like pasta, pizza, sandwiches, burger in Indian households almost

every week as a complete meal not just mere snack. Among 1000 subjects 80% were making such meals once a week especially in young age group. Earlier the idea of a meal was different.

The meal consisted of dal rice vegetables and roti a complete traditional meal but now a plate of pizza or pasta was considered as a meal [3].

As per one study by NY (New York) daily news, Indians invested 13 hours a week cooking. Indians spent highest hours as compared to other countries. In terms of gender, Hindustan Times stated that globally 34 percent of women in comparison to 25 percent of men had knowledge of food and cooking. Women spent over seven and a half hours per week cooking while men spend just five hours a week. This is particularly true for India where most household and child-rearing responsibilities are handled by women [4].

A survey was conducted in Shimla using a structured questionnaire on 150 subjects selected by simple random sampling. The results stated that out of 150 respondents only 27.3% preferred traditional food, rest 72.6% preferred modern food types this shift was due to modern food didn't take as much time. It was seen that palatability of people was changed. Shifts in choices of food was due to advertisements, overall change in their lifestyle and easy access to outdoor meals [5].

Students living away from home have to compromise on various aspects. Overall health is affected the most because of poor dietary habits and stagnant lifestyle with zero physical activity. Unavailability of nutritious food and inability to prepare food at home increases consumption of junk and processed food which triggers the risk of obesity and various other non-communicable disease. With the view of above given literature the present study was carried out with the following broad objective: Knowing the competence of home-based cooking practices and studying the knowledge attitude and practices related to cooking among young university students residing in Vadodara city.

Methods and Materials

With the help of snowball sampling method, 400 subjects (200 students who lived at their home and 200 students who lived in hostel/PG) were selected.

The study was conducted in 4 phases.

Phase 1: Three types of questionnaire were formed namely, general information questionnaire, cooking questionnaire and food frequency questionnaire via online mode

Phase 2: Pretesting of developed questionnaires was carried out and necessary modification were made to achieve final questionnaire.

Phase 3: Questionnaires were sent to the subjects through online medium where they filled up all the required details and submitted the response. Telephonic conversations also took place for generating specific information about food frequency questionnaire.

Phase 4: After the data was collected it was analysed using appropriate statistical techniques.

Result and Discussion

Background Information

Majority subjects who cooked at their home on their own were females (67.16%). Also, majority subjects who cooked

on their own were from nuclear families (79.25%) as compared to joint family (20.74%). Majority of parents of subjects who cooked on their own were graduated. (father 81.48%, mother 68.88%).

Majority females (69.23%) spend time in cooking. In the aspect of religion, a large number of subjects were Hindu. Majority of the subjects were living in nuclear family (70.28%) who knew how to cook, which was 4 times more as compared to subjects living in joint family (29.91%). However, number of students who did not cook in nuclear family were also in greater proportion as compared to joint family.

Knowledge and Attitude of Subjects on Cooking Skills

Students cooking on their own (67%) were more than subjects who didn't. (33%). Majority of the subjects cooked 2 to 3 times a week. (51.50%). In the data of practices related to cooking it was found that irrespective of the cooking status, majority of the subjects involved in chopping vegetables/ preparing salad (64.50%) followed by making batter/dough. (58%). Family factors did not affect subjects from learning to cook. Majority of the subjects (98.50%) liked the taste of homemade food. Majority subject's mother was home-maker (77%). According to data majority responses were cooking a perfect meal (37.50%) followed by cooking ready to eat (23.50%), consuming packet food (22.50%) and the least was ordering food from outside. (16.50%) when they were hungry. Large number of responses on reason for ordering outside were they liked the taste (90%) peer influence (7%). Majority of the subjects were willing to learn cooking/improve their cooking skills (75%). Most of the subject's family did not believe in cooking is a women's business (84%) hence majority sons in subject's family learned cooking (91%). Almost all the subjects believed that cooking was good for health (99%) because it provided more nutrition (53%), outside food is unhealthy (22%) important for calorie intake control (17%) and they also believed both boys and girls should learn cooking (98%).

The results on hostel and PG students revealed that majority (58.50%) of subjects cook their food by their own as compared to those who did not cook their food by their own (41.50%). Most of the subjects indulged in cooking 3 to 6 times a week (19.50%) followed by daily (16.50%) and majority of them (49.50%) never cooked. Majority students spent 1 to 3 hours in cooking activity (46.50%). 74.5% of hostel living subjects enjoyed cooking. Mother taught cooking to majority of the subjects. (73%). Subjects always preferred complete meal (78%) over light snacks (12%) from hostel canteen. Food purchased from outside, was majorly preferred full meal (49%), followed by ready to eat (25%) and the least preferred were snacks (17.50%).

Frequency of Healthy and Unhealthy Food Intake Practices in the Subjects

Majority subjects who cooked on their own consumed whole grains (82.35%), pulses (52.94%) and millets, green leafy vegetables and dry fruits were consumed moderately. Non-veg was the least consumed food in by both subjects who cooked and who didn't cook (never 41.17%, 20% respectively). Subjects who did not cook also consumed whole grains daily (70%), millets and leafy vegetables moderately. The data of subjects who cooked on their own revealed that intake was of sweets/ chocolates 1-7 days (58.82%) was high. Bakery products were consumed 1-3 days per week (47.05%). Outside snacks were consumed

occasionally (64.70%). Soft drinks were consumed occasionally (52.94%). According to the data on consumption of junk food, subjects consumed junk food occasionally (70.58%) followed by 1-5 days a week (29.41%). Data of subjects who did not cook stated that consumption of sweets was almost equal to the subjects who cooked. (50%). Bakery items were consumed 1-3 days a week (50%) and 4-7 days per week (35%). Soft drinks were consumed occasionally (60%). Consumption of junk food was more in 1-5 days a week (50%) as compared to the subjects who cooked on their own. It was being observed that majority students who cook their own food consume bakery products once a week (55.55%) as compared to subjects who did not cook on their own (54.16%). Students who prefer unhealthy food also make their food by themselves most of the days. There was no huge difference observed in occasional consumption of soft drinks and sweets between students who cook and did not cook.

Conclusion

The study concluded that in this era too, a greater number of females as compared to males are into cooking but, both male and female subjects are aware of health benefits of cooking at home and majority are willing to improve or learn practices related to household cooking. But there are still consumption of outside food, due to unawareness of the harmful effects of the same. Major reason of ordering food from outside was because of the taste. On a positive note, larger part of the data stated that subject's family did not believe in cooking is a women's business hence majority sons in subject's family learned cooking. Almost all the subjects believed that cooking was good for health because it provided more nutrition and they also believed both boys and girls should learn cooking. And the frequency of consumption of healthy and unhealthy food has a correlation with their ability to cook.

Recommendations

There are a very few studies available on cooking practices and its linkage with nutritional status of the subjects and hence more research is required in this field.

Acknowledgement

Author 2 and 3 are grateful to author 1 for constant support and guidance.

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