



International Journal of Home Science

ISSN: 2395-7476

IJHS 2024; 10(2): 251-252

© 2024 IJHS

www.home-sciencejournal.com

Received: 21-05-2024

Accepted: 22-06-2024

Neha Maheshwari

Assistant Professor, Department of Arts, Ram Chameli Chadha Vishvas Girls College, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

Geetanjali Khurana

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Ram Chameli Chadha Vishvas Girls College, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

Junk food consumption trends in students during exams: A review

Neha Maheshwari and Geetanjali Khurana

Abstract

The consumption of junk food among students, particularly during exam periods, is a growing concern in India. This review paper examines the prevalence, underlying reasons, health implications, and impact on academic performance associated with junk food consumption among Indian students during exams. Studies reveal a significant increase in junk food intake during exams due to stress, time constraints, and peer influence. The consumption of such food, high in sugar and unhealthy fats, leads to various health issues, including obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases. Furthermore, poor nutrition negatively affects cognitive function and academic performance. The paper underscores the need for comprehensive strategies involving educational institutions, parents, and students to promote healthy eating habits and stress management, ultimately improving health outcomes and academic success.

Keywords: Junk food, exams, stress, nutrition, students, obesity, diabetes

Introduction

The consumption of junk food has seen a significant rise globally, and India is no exception. This trend is particularly noticeable among students, especially during the high-stress periods of exams. The availability, affordability, and palatability of junk food make it a convenient choice for students. However, the implications of such dietary habits on health and academic performance are concerning. This research paper aims to review the current literature on the consumption of junk food during exams among students in India, exploring its prevalence, reasons, and effects on health and academic outcomes.

Prevalence of Junk Food Consumption among Students

Several studies indicate a high prevalence of junk food consumption among students in India. A study by Singh *et al.* (2015) ^[15] found that over 70% of students in urban areas consumed junk food more than three times a week. This trend is more pronounced during exam periods, as reported by Das *et al.* (2017) ^[3], who observed a 30% increase in the intake of junk food among students during exams compared to regular school days. The stress associated with exams drives many students to seek comfort in easily accessible, tasty, but unhealthy food options.

Reasons for Increased Consumption during Exams

The reasons behind the increased consumption of junk food during exams are multifaceted. Stress is a primary factor, as highlighted by Patel *et al.* (2016) ^[9], who noted that stress-induced eating is prevalent among students facing academic pressure. Junk food, high in sugar and fat, provides a temporary sense of relief and pleasure, which helps students cope with stress (Sinha & Gupta, 2018) ^[14].

Time constraints also play a crucial role. During exams, students often have limited time for meal preparation, leading them to opt for quick and convenient junk food options (Kumar *et al.*, 2019) ^[6]. Peer influence and the marketing strategies of junk food companies further exacerbate this issue, making junk food a popular choice among students (Sharma *et al.*, 2020) ^[13].

Corresponding Author:

Neha Maheshwari

Assistant Professor, Department of Arts, Ram Chameli Chadha Vishvas Girls College, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

Health Implications The health implications of consuming junk food are well-documented. Junk food is typically high in calories, sugar, and unhealthy fats, and low in essential nutrients (Ray & Jat, 2010) ^[11]. This dietary pattern can lead to various health issues, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and gastrointestinal problems (Gupta & Kapoor, 2013) ^[5].

Studies specific to Indian students have shown alarming trends. For instance, a study by Chatterjee *et al.* (2014) ^[2] reported a significant increase in body mass index (BMI) among students who frequently consumed junk food during exams. Another study by Mehta *et al.* (2016) ^[7] linked high junk food consumption with increased levels of cholesterol and triglycerides in adolescents, posing a risk for future cardiovascular diseases.

Impact on Academic Performance

The impact of junk food on academic performance is another critical area of concern. Nutrition plays a vital role in cognitive function, memory, and concentration, all of which are essential for academic success (Bryan *et al.*, 2004) ^[1]. Junk food, however, lacks the necessary nutrients that support brain health.

A study by Singh and Sharma (2015) ^[16] found that students who regularly consumed junk food had lower academic performance compared to those who followed a balanced diet. This finding is supported by Patel and Mehta (2018) ^[8], who observed that high junk food intake was associated with poorer grades and lower cognitive function in students.

Strategies to Mitigate Junk Food Consumption

To address the issue of junk food consumption among students, especially during exams, several strategies can be implemented. Schools and colleges can play a significant role by promoting healthy eating habits and providing healthier food options in canteens (Saxena & Gupta, 2017) ^[12]. Nutrition education programs that inform students about the adverse effects of junk food and the benefits of a balanced diet can also be effective (Verma *et al.*, 2019) ^[17].

Parents and caregivers can support healthy eating by preparing nutritious meals and snacks that are both convenient and appealing to students (Rao *et al.*, 2018) ^[10]. Additionally, stress management programs that teach students coping mechanisms other than eating can help reduce stress-induced junk food consumption (Deshpande *et al.*, 2017) ^[4].

Conclusion

The consumption of junk food during exams is a prevalent issue among students in India, driven by stress, time constraints, and peer influence. While junk food may offer temporary relief from stress, its long-term health implications and negative impact on academic performance cannot be overlooked. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach involving educational institutions, parents, and the students themselves. Promoting healthy eating habits and providing support for stress management can help mitigate the reliance on junk food, leading to better health outcomes and academic performance for students.

References

1. Bryan J, Osendarp S, Hughes D, Calvaresi E, Baghurst K, van Klinken JW. Nutrients for cognitive function and mental health in children: Systematic review. *Nutr Rev.* 2004;62(8):295-306.
2. Chatterjee S, Ghosh A, Chatterjee S, Gupta S, Chatterjee

3. Das S, Dutta S, Ghosh S, Chakraborty S, Dey B. Junk food consumption among adolescents during exam stress: A study in urban school students. *Indian J Public Health Res Dev.* 2017;8(3):310-314.
4. Deshpande N, Bhosale A, Agarkhedkar S, *et al.* Role of stress management programs in reducing junk food consumption among students. *Indian J Health Wellbeing.* 2017;8(11):1348-1350.
5. Gupta N, Kapoor S. Junk food and its impact on health. *Indian J Public Health.* 2013;57(4):234-238.
6. Kumar R, Sharma M, Sharma P, Gupta N. Factors influencing junk food consumption among adolescents in urban India. *J Adolesc.* 2019;72:52-60.
7. Mehta R, Sharma S, Rastogi V, Bansal M, Sharma RK. Lipid profile of adolescents consuming junk food. *Indian J Pediatr.* 2016;83(8):888-892.
8. Patel V, Mehta P. Impact of junk food on academic performance: A cross-sectional study among school children in Surat. *Int J Med Sci Public Health.* 2018;7(3):214-219.
9. Patel V, Chaubey R, Mehta P, Patel R, Rajgor D. Stress-induced eating in adolescents: An Indian study. *J Health Soc Behav.* 2016;57(2):232-240.
10. Rao S, Joshi P, Kelkar R, Kamble M, Agarwal S. Role of parents in shaping children's eating habits and preventing junk food consumption. *Indian J Fam Community Med.* 2018;4(2):105-110.
11. Ray A, Jat RK. Junk food and health risks: A review. *J Obes Metab Res.* 2010;1(1):23-28.
12. Saxena A, Gupta S. Promoting healthy eating habits in schools: A review. *Indian J Community Health.* 2017;29(1):44-47.
13. Sharma R, Sharma A, Kumari R, Kumari N, Sharma A. Peer influence and junk food consumption among adolescents. *J Adolesc.* 2020;75:60-69.
14. Sinha R, Gupta R. Stress and junk food consumption among students: A review. *Indian J Psychol.* 2018;75(4):329-337.
15. Singh A, Jain A, Joshi A, Deepti SS. Junk food consumption among school children in urban India: A cross-sectional study. *Indian J Public Health.* 2015;59(3):188-192.
16. Singh P, Sharma A. Junk food and academic performance among adolescents. *Int J Med Sci Educ.* 2015;2(2):111-116.
17. Verma A, Singh A, Rohilla R, Gill A, Kishore J, Kumar R. Effectiveness of nutrition education programs in reducing junk food consumption among school children. *Indian J Community Med.* 2019;44(1):44-48