

Effects of Knowledge on Nutrition and Eating Habits of Bilecik University Students

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Abstract: A problem facing youth today is the lack of available healthy fast foods or easily prepared foods. During adolescence, young people are assuming responsibility for their own eating habits, health-related attitudes and behaviours and their growing independence is often associated with unconventional eating patterns. The aim of this study was detecting the effect of knowledge on nutrition and affecting healthy food choices in Bilecik University students. Researching data were collected from 471 of Bilecik University students in 2 campuses. In the present study which was done the method of simple randomized sampling and completed questionnaires to nutritional knowledge, eating habits and behaviours of them. 209 (%44.4) of male students and 262 (%55.6) of female students were examined. It was found that the average weights of the male and female students, who were at the ages of 17-23, were 60.85 kg and the average heights of them were 168.03m. Applied questionnaires before and after giving nutritional training, the results demonstrated that students improved their eating habits and behaviours; consumption ratio of fruits-vegetables for everyday was increased from %36.7 to %46.2; sugary foods consumption ratio was decreased from %91.7 to %88.7. At breakfast, drinking tea-coffee ratio was also decreased from %81 to %73.9; drinking fruits / vegetable juices -milk ratio was raised to %26.1 from %19. The lunch and dinner choices of students were seemed to develop; eating nick nack frequency was reduced from %18.1 to % 15.8, consumption meat with unhealthy fats was down %38.3 to %27.7. On the other hand eating vegetables frequency was getting increase %9.8 up to %16.6. Nutrition education for students should incorporate self-efficacy, relevant health values and barriers-to-change, education about nutrients, and improved access to healthy foods. Student smoking and drinking should also be targeted.

Keywords: Nutrition, knowledge, eating habits, University student

Introduction

University students living away from home had developed more unfavourable eating habits than students living at the family home. These findings suggest that moving away from the family home and assuming responsibility for food preparation and purchasing for the first time affect dietary habits in this sample of University students. Students living at home did not show major changes in their eating habits since starting University [1,2].

University students living away from the family home have little time and space when it comes to meal preparation within the confines of dorms, apartments, or shared housing. An additional concern is the knowledge needed to determine which food items to select[3,4]. Students living away from the family home had made some changes; they decreased their weekly consumption of fresh fruit, cooked and raw vegetables, oily fish, seafood, pulses and olive oil, and increased their sugar, wine, alcohol and fast food intake [5-7]. During adolescence, young people are assuming responsibility for their own eating habits, health-related attitudes and behaviours and their growing independence is often associated with unconventional eating patterns[8,9]. Healthy eating related negatively to television watching and alcohol, and positively to self-efficacy, nutrition knowledge, considering weight control [10,11].

Recognition of barriers to change, the extent of social support and the development of skills, e.g. in selecting low-fat foods, are among enabling factors affecting food choices. Assessment of the costs and benefits of dietary change and dealing with feelings of deprivation from restriction of favourite foods also influence diet-related behaviour [12-15]. Sufficient knowledge about diet is needed for an individual to assess the quality of their own diet and their perception of dietary norms, particularly in regard to people whose opinions they

consider significant, influences their classification with regard to stage of change. Motivation to adopt healthy eating patterns and self-efficacy are important determinants of behavioural change . The aim of this study was detecting the effect of knowledge on nutrition and affecting healthy food choices in Bilecik University students.

Materials and Method

In this study was chosen one faculty and one Higher Education School of Bilecik University. A self-reported questionnaire was administered to 471 students, ranging in age from 19-23 years. 209 (%44.4) of male students and 262 (%55.6) of female students were examined. It was found that the average weights of the male and female students, who were 60.85 kg and the average heights of them, were 168.03cm. An interviewing form consisting of 15 questions about eating habits and nutrition was applied to these students. Questionnaire data were analysed with the method of simple randomized sampling and completed questionnaires to nutritional knowledge, eating habits and behaviours of Bilecik University students.

Results

Applied questionnaires before and after giving nutritional training, the results demonstrated that students improved their eating habits and behaviours. Figure1. shows that the consumption ratio of fruits-vegetables for everyday. It was increased from %36.7 to %46.2 .

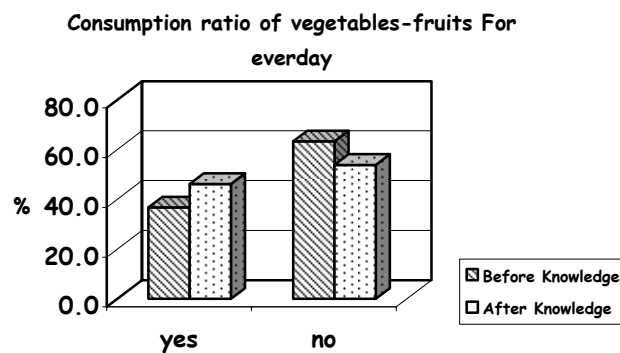


Figure 1. The consumption ratio of fruits-vegetables for everyday

Sugary foods consumption ratio data is given in Figure 2 as a block diagram. As you seen, the sugary foods consumption ratio was decreased from %91.7 to %88.7.

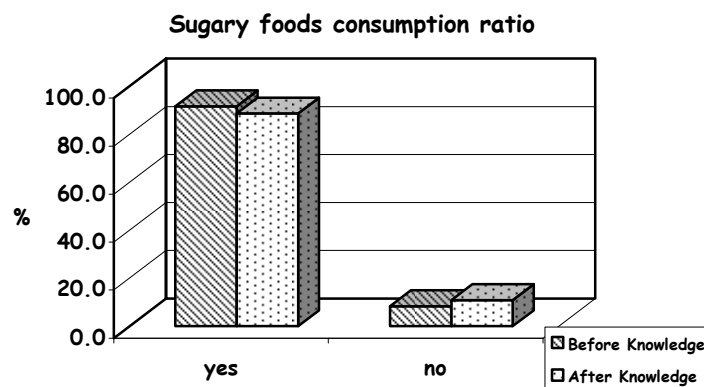


Figure 2. Sugary foods consumption ratio

As drinking tea-coffee ratio was decreased from %81 to %73.9 , drinking fruits / vegetable juices -milk ratio was raised to %26.1 from %19 at breakfast. (Fig.3.)

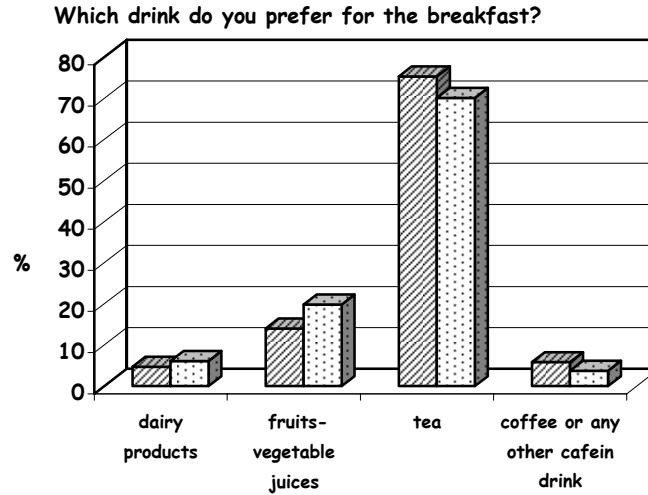
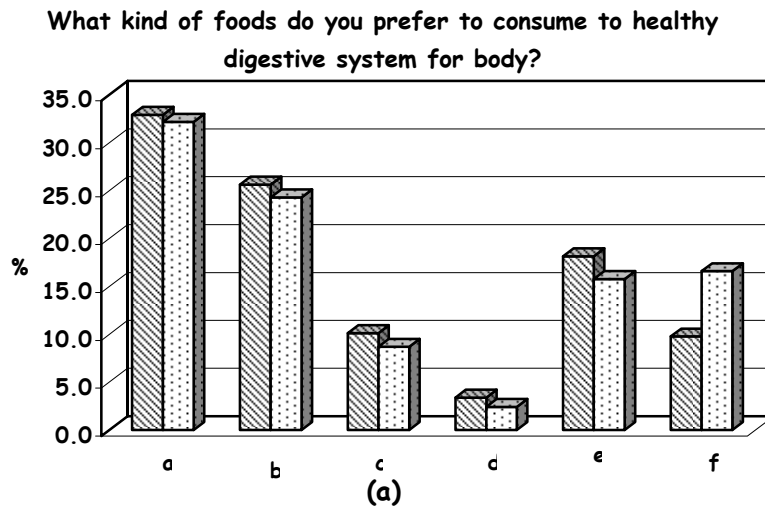


Figure 3. Most preferred beverages at breakfast

The lunch and dinner choices of students were seemed to develop; eating vegetables frequency was getting increase %9.8 up to %16.6, on the other hand eating nick nack frequency was reduced from %18.1 to %15.8 (Fig.4(a)), and also consumption meat with unhealthy fats was down %38.3 to %27.7(Fig.4(b))



- a) always eating of rice/macaroni for three times per a week
- c) always eating of fresh fruits for twice per a day
- e) eating nick nack frequently

- b) always eating of cereals at least two times per a week
- d) always eating of fresh vegetables for three times per a day
- f) eating vegetables frequently

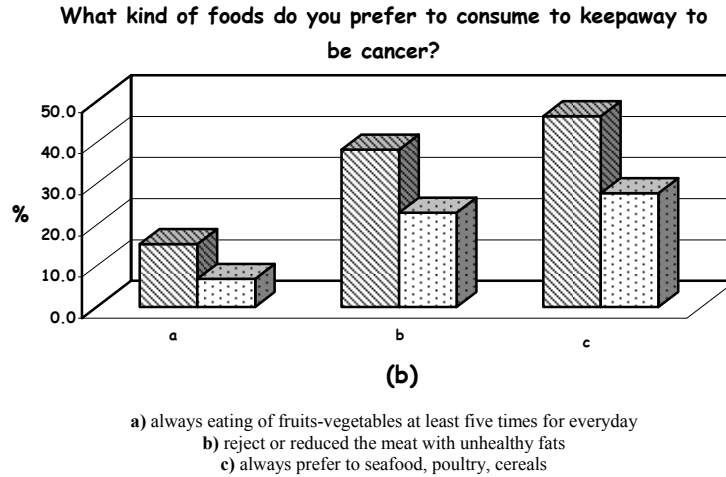


Figure 4(a,b) Most preferred foods to healthy body

To enable the young generations to gain healthy dietary practices and to provide the access to healthy food are the main measures.

Conclusion

Although students have adequate knowledge about nutrition, they eat frequently junk food. But the best thing is that the students prefer mostly healthy food after knowledge on nutrition and eating habits. Habits involving regular eating patterns and vegetable intake were reported and represent practices that ought to be encouraged. Knowledge about healthy food choices can be a predisposing factor for the adoption of a healthy diet but it is insufficient to motivate healthy eating and psychosocial factors must also be considered. Nutrition interventions in this young population should be encouraged to promote healthier diets and lifestyles, as well as adherence to the traditional Mediterranean diet. Current research indicates that as the students' knowledge increases, nutritional quality of food choices improves.

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