

STUDENT'S HEALTH AND DIET HABITS IN FACULTY OF FOOD PRODUCTS TECHNOLOGY FROM TIMISOARA, ROMANIA

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ABSTRACT

Our study followed the student's health and habits diet using some nutritional questionnaires for students at the Faculty of Food Products Technology, Timisoara Romania. The students that took part of the present study had between 20 and 24 years old, boys and girls, and participated as volunteers.

With the persented questionnair we tried to analyzed some nutritional and diet aspects such as: weight, body mass index, body shape perception; health status and diet habits; physical activity and student's perception; and the knowledge about the basis of human nutrition.

The results of the questionnaires were presented graphically as percent values.

As results of the questionnaires, the girls students are preoccupied of weight and body shape perception with a big trend to be very skinny and thin. The boys students are also interested of their weight and body shape but their goals are to be skinny but to have well outlined muscles. Also, most of the students replace vegetables and fruits with snacks or sweets, and most of them do not drink enough liquids. Questioned students know that sport and physical activity is very good for having a nice body shape and have a good health status, but only a few of them practice some physical sports. Between macronutrients intake, micronutritents intake and optimal energy level there were no healthy nutrition correspondence.

Having these results in view, and comparing these results with older similar results of the same questionnaire (2008), we can observe that in the last years the nutritional basic knowledge is improved, and students try to eat properly. Also, the health status, as they report, is improved for students in campus and students that live together with their family.

Key words: student's diet and health, nutritional questionnaire.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching Human Nutrition notions in a Faculty of Food Products Technology at University of Agriculture Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Banat, we observed that students become very interested about nutrition and diet. And having in view the result of the same nutritional questioner, we can say that lately the students have more knowledge about the correlations between nutrition, diet, and health status and body shape. Thus, the nutritional questionnaires were special prepared for the students in the second year of study, at the middle of Human Nutrition courses and laboratories, both for volunteers' boys and girls.

But, it is obviously that students' preoccupation about human nutrition, diet and health, is limited to theoretical facts. Girl students have a special purpose to be skinny, and they are very interested by taking pills or herbs tee to lose weight, instead to have a balance and

personal assign diet completed with physical activities. Boys are interested by having a nice shaped muscle body, and because that, most of these students are trying to consume more proteins or amino acids than they need.

More and more studies demonstrate that most of the students have meals that give more calories than is needed, and the required is not good correlated with intake of nutrients (Brunt and Rhee, 2008; Daigle and Villalon, 2008; Laskshin and Kozhevnikova, 2008; and Moore et al., 2008).

Also, the meal based on snacks consumed in a big hurry, associated with the consumption of carbonated juices, negatively influence the body mass index and weight management (Arroyo Izaga, et al., 2006).

Most of the students that live with their family eat more varied food compared with the students from the campus. Students with family eat cooked meals and various food groups. They are also interested in the time of meal, and they most of the time, try to adjust the time of meal with the recommended food group (Papadaki et al., 2007). Of course, the girl students that are already mothers of little babies read more about principles of human nutrition and applied more their knowledge for babies and for all their family too.

Nutrition problems for students and not only are a preoccupation of many researchers all over the world, and because of this the nutritionists try to talk with the students and inform them about the negative physical and psychical health consequences (Grodner et al., 2000; Insel et al., 2004; Whitney and Rolfes, 2005; Ruka et al., 2005; Brown, 2008; Geissler and Powers, 2009).

Latest results and data of nutritional studies referred to students' diet and food habits, try to bring for students enough arguments to change their life and eating habits for a good health and more dynamic life.

MATERIALS and METHODS

In this study we wanted to check the nutritional knowledge of food diet habits and eating habits, for the students from the second year of study, at the Faculty of Food Products Technology, after half of semester of nutrition courses.

For relevant results of present questioner, we try to work with volunteers and the dean of faculty and students were informed in advance about the questioner, but not about the questions of the questioner. Also, the students had the possibility to refuse to answer at one or more questioner' questions.

The students were represented by boys and girls, a total of 83 students. Also, we ask the students to answer in the same class-hour at the questions from the questioner because we did not want students to talk to each other and give unreal answers. The age range for questioned students was between 20 and 24 years old. Thus, from 83 students – 54 were girls and 29 were boys, who represent 65.06% (girls) and 34.94% boys.

Most of the questioned students were very young, without their own family, which wanted to be full-time students and employees in the same time. From this reason students eat in hurry fast-food products, eat snacks, drink a lot of coffee and sugar added beverages and eat sweets.

The nutritional questioner used very short answers, and many answers were with "Yes" or "No", or they had to choose one of more given answers. In the first part of the study we asked the students about age, gender, height, weight, body mass index, ideal weight, and the physical or intellectual activity. Then the questions were about their perception of how they look like, body shape, and balance diet, type of food in their diet (vegetables, fruits, cereals / snacks, carbonated and sweet juices, peanuts, seeds, coffee, alcohol). The third

part of the questioner proposes some questions about nutritional minimum knowledge, such as: energetic value of 1 gram of nutrient, macronutrients and micronutrients. The last part of the questioner propose some questions about their physical activity (how often, type of physical activity, effort intensity). Also, the questioner had some questions about their life stile (if they live in the campus, or with their parents, if they have their own family or baby).

The results of the study were statistically performed, were reproduce as percent, for total number of students and for boys and girls.

RESULTS

Most of the students that live with their family eat more varied food, more cooked meals, including vegetables as vegetable soup, salads, or fruits. The students that live in the student campus eat a lot of eggs, potatoes, pasta, meat food products and sweets and the time of last meal is very late. Also, most of the students drink a lot of caffeine, including coffee, and energy drinks, and also 95% from all interviewed students did not eat the breakfast in the morning.

Eating snacks, eating in hurry, drinking sweet carbonated juices, drinking alcohol and eating concentrated sweets is the way of nutrition disorders, gain weight, and unpleasant body shape, for both boys and girls.

From the studied results, 69% from the students are overweight (57 students from 83), meaning 64% are overweight girls (53 girls) and only 36% overweight boys (30 boys).

At questions about the fluid consumption, 78% from the students drink enough liquids, but more girls drink water instead of juices compared to boys. Most of the boys drink too much alcohol (most of the boys drink a lot of beer), drinks with caffeine, and carbonated juices instead fresh fruits or vegetable juices.

About 81% from the students eat meat everyday, and most of them eat fried pork or chicken (fried in oil).

Consumption of vegetables, fruits and cereals is very low, meaning that only 11% of the interview students eat daily these food groups that bring into diet a lot of important and essential nutrients.

CONCLUSIONS

- Our study revealed an unbalanced nutrition for students that live with their families or in the student campus. Most of the students are overweight (69% from the total students, meaning 64% girls and 36% boys).
- About 95% from the interviewed students din not eat breakfast.
- Most of the students drink a lot of caffeine, including coffee, and energy drinks.
- A percent of 78% from the students drink enough liquids, but more girls drink water instead of juices compared to boys.
- Having in view the fluid consumption, most of the boys drink too much alcohol (most of the boys drink a lot of beer), drinks with caffeine, and carbonated juices instead fresh fruits or vegetable juices.
- After these conclusions we can observe that students are not well informed about the nutrition importance in their health status and their body shape perception. Also, their knowledge and their interest for having a well balance nutrition is not under their

preoccupation and more ways for information and explanations about importance of nutrition would be welcome at primary school, high school, and also in universities.

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