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The Effect of Fast Food Consumption on Development of Mental Disorders

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Fast Food Consumption and Development of Mental Disorders



Abstract

Increasing evidence suggests a relationship between fast food consumption and the progression of mental disorders such as depression and anxiety. The study conducted aimed to identify whether or not there is an association between these two factors. An anonymous online survey was administered through Google forms. The survey included basic demographic questions regarding diet and mood. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze data in SPSS version 25.0. Our results suggest that there is an association between increased consumption of fast food and the prevalence of mental disorders. Practicing healthier eating habits along with limiting fast food consumption may prevent or lower the risks of developing mental health disorders.

Introduction

- Processed foods consumption affects physiology in unanticipated ways that promote metabolic dysfunction and favor the development of depression (Donoso et al. 2020).
- Previous research has shown a positive correlation between the consumption of fast food and the risk of depression (Villegas et al., 2012).
- Another study found that a diet high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, and low-fat dairy was associated with a lower risk of depression and anxiety disorders. On the other hand, a diet high in processed and fried foods, refined grains, sugary products, and beer was associated with a higher risk of depression and anxiety disorders (Smith et al. 2020).
- The purpose of this study was to see if there is a relationship between the amount of fast food consumption and prevalence of mental disorders.

Acknowledgements

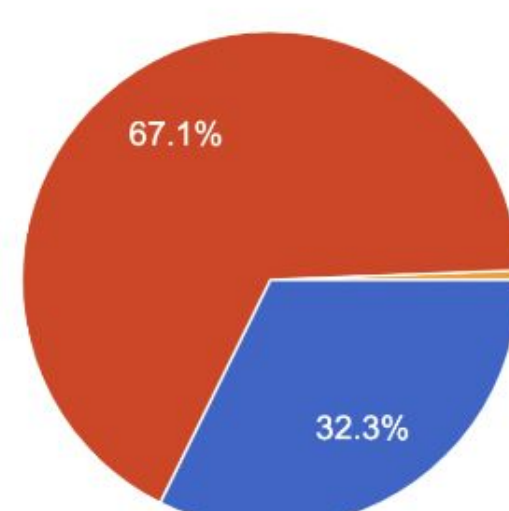
- Thank you to Dr. Begdache, our TA Alexander Talkachov, as well as the HWS department and class for help with data collection and research.

Methods

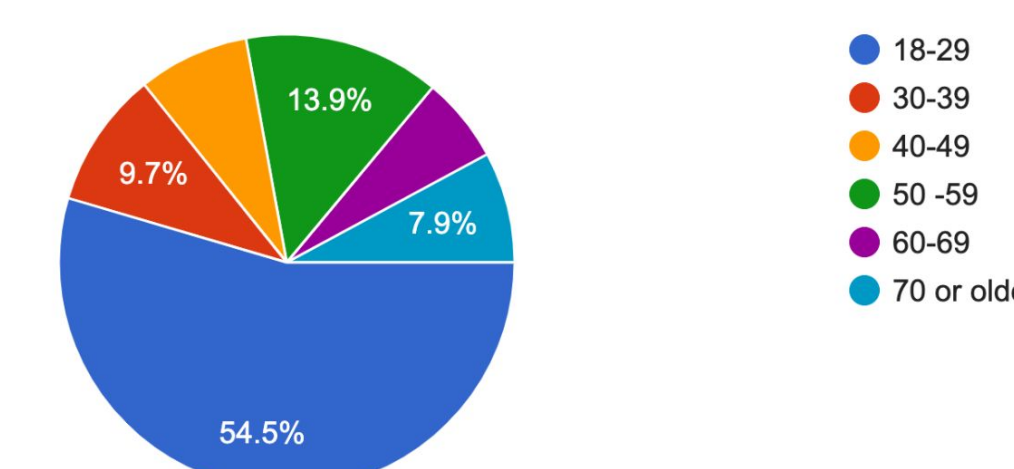
Demographics	Male and Female, age varied from 18-70+
Number of Participants	165
Survey	The Association between Diet and Mood
Deliverance	Word of mouth, Groupme, Instagram

Results

1. What is your gender?
164 responses



2. What is your age?
165 responses



- There were a total of 165 participants with 67% female, and 33% male with the predominant age range of 18-22.
- The results showed significant positive correlations between symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Nervousness and fast food consumption had a pearson correlation of $p=0.316$.
- Feelings of restlessness with constant fidgeting and fast food consumption showed a pearson correlation of $p=0.220$.
- Perceived effort and sugary processed food consumption had a pearson correlation of $p=0.233$.
- Feelings of worthlessness and consumption of fast food showed a correlation of $p=0.223$.

Fast/Sugary Food Consumption with Feelings of:	Pearson Correlation:
Nervousness	0.316
Restlessness and Fidgeting	0.220
Perceived Effort	0.233
Worthlessness	0.223

Discussion

- Participants who reported high fast food and sugary processed food consumption were more positively correlated with feelings associated with depression and anxiety.
- However, it was seen that there were many insignificant negative correlations between inclusion of whole grains, fruits and animal proteins and feelings of depression and anxiety.
- The fact that significant positive correlations are shown with the inclusion of fast and processed foods, and insignificant negative correlations are shown with the inclusion of nutrient dense foods, potentially shows that the harm in mental health from fast food is greater than the positive effects of a healthier diet.
- Since the strongest significant correlation found was with nervousness and fast food consumption, the two could possibly be associated, in that people in stressful situations need a quick or cheap meal, which could start a cycle of consistent feedings of fast food and feelings of anxiety.

Conclusion

- Feelings of depression and anxiety were positively associated with the consumption of unhealthy foods.
- Individuals vulnerable to depression and anxiety may resort to unhealthy food for psychological comfort.
- These findings support the need for more nutrition-based programs as well as the promotion of physical activities in educational settings.

References

References
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