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Food intake habits, a problem in university students in Mexico

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Background: Lifestyle and balanced diet are essential for a healthy life. University students have changed their diet habits; choosing high-fat foods from industrialized sources over healthy foods. This, along with a decreasing intake of fruits and vegetables, leads to overweight and obesity. Mexico is a country with prevalence in overweight and obesity in adults (72.5%); which is a serious health problem that echoes on the incidence of chronic diseases.

Aim: The aim of this study is to know the eating behavior of university students.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional study was performed considering a sample constituted by 30 university students (18 to 30 years old). They were invited to participate and accepted with informed consent. A validated and reliable instrument was used to measure food consumption and food preparation habits.

Results: Data obtained from questionnaire indicated that

53% students choose fruits and 46.7% choose vegetables, due to their flavor. Regarding the reason for the lack of fruits intake, 33.3% stated that they do not have a personal commitment and 26.6% indicated that fruits are expensive. Concerning vegetables, 33.3% answered that they have no time to prepare them for consumption. Respecting to food intake outside home; 40% buy lunch on a weekly basis; thus, they rarely have breakfast or dinner outside home. Students eat cookies, soda and sometimes fruits during the day. Solely 16.7% of students had one serving per day of vegetables, and 30% had one intake per day of fruits.

Conclusions: The ingestion of fruits and vegetables is below the recommended by WHO (five servings per day). Additionally, these students have high ingestion of cereals. With these results, it is necessary to make an intervention to improve food increasing intake of vegetables.

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