

IMPACT OF NUTRITION COURSES ON DIETARY HABITS AND LIFESTYLE OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Good nutrition is critical during the teenage years to ensure healthy growth and development. A healthy diet must meet the changing nutritional needs of a growing teenager. The diet of adolescents, particularly college going students is typically high in calories, fat, sugar, sodium and often fails to meet the daily recommended amounts of fruits, vegetables, and calcium-rich foods. The frequent consumption of unhealthy diets in combination with the lack of physical activity leads to poor nutritional status. The present study was conducted on university students to study the behavioral changes in dietary habits and lifestyle using experimental intervention design. Significant and beneficial changes in dietary habits have been found in university students with nutrition specialization.

The study revealed that the mean scores for nutrition knowledge in pro-test was significantly different. After the intervention of nutrition course ninety percent of nutrition students in the intervention group appeared to have formed positive behavior towards adoption of healthy eating habits. The intervention group became conscious in selection of food specially meal timings having breakfast without fail. Nutrition specialization students included fruits, milk, low salt & sugar, germinated legumes and showed control behavior in consumption of fast foods, while controlling group shown status quo. Hence nutrition education could be incorporated at degree level as curriculum irrespective of their specialization to help students make decisions about their dietary intake.

KEYWORDS: Behavioral changes, Diet, Impact, Lifestyle, Nutrition course