Opinion

Breakfast eating patterns among age group 13–15 years of school going girls

Abstract

To determine breakfast eating patterns among school going children in the age group 13 to 15 years.

Objective

a. To interpret the importance breakfast perceived by children in age group 13 to 15 years

b. To study the breakfast eating patterns among school children in the age group 13 to 15years

c. To study the changes in breakfast consumption in relation to school timing

d. To study the type of breakfast foods consumed by this age group

e. To study the nutritional contribution of food consumed during breakfast

f. To determine whether this age group children met 1/3rd requirement of their daily intake as recommended by RDA.

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Methodology

A sample of 42 girls in the age group of 13 to 15 years was studied in this project attending 8th, 9th & 10th grade in schools of Central Mumbai. The economic status was not low below average (2lakh annually). Subjects from different religion were surveyed & analysed to observe breakfast patterns widely. Data was collected using a questionnaire consisting of general information, family medical record, 24 hour dietary recall, dietary eating patterns, knowledge, anthropometry, physical activity, perception of health and was administered to the children to be filled by their parents or guardians Dietary assessment was recorded on the first day of interview to evaluate the adequacy of the diet & to understand the changes in habit, preferences to various food. At the end of the first interview, the subjects were given instructions on how to maintain a seven day food record from wake up time to 12 noon with the use of standard household measurements. They were asked to enter the meals in terms of standard katori, 200ml glass & 15cm diameter cut out of chapatti. The form was then collected at the fixed date & entries were reviewed. A food frequency questionnaire was administered to understand the eating patterns of this age group. A detailed calculation of the foods consumed by the subjects was accomplished using standard values (Gopalan) by using standard recipes from calorie counter (1993).

59.5% subjects consumed breakfast , while remaining were inconsistent, out of this, 52% stated lack of time, 28% were not hungry, and others stated different reasons like being bored, didn't like for this inconsistency. 59% subject preferred home cooked food while14% preferred hotel/canteen foods. 62% never consumed fruits as breakfast. Subjects listed cereal based foods like poha, upma, cornflakes, breads, biscuits, parathas, idli & dosas, khakras & beverages like tea, coffee, milk, juices & milkshakes as the most important breakfast items Most of subjects knew exactly what breakfast meant i:e to break overnight fast, while other answers were; as to get energy, just to eat, a healthy eating, to fulfil hunger 40% of subject perceived breakfast as the important meal of the day as compared to lunch & dinner, while 40% stated breakfast can be skipped as they perceived it to be less important 45% consumed higher calories in form of processed food & calorically dense foods. This was because of consumption of calorically dense foods like biscuits, chips, samosas, chocolates. (1/3rd requirement of calories being 686kcal)Only 12% were able to meet their protein requirement. Protein intake was found to be lower than that needed for optimum growth. (1/4th requirement of proteins being 16gm) Consumption of saturated fat was higher, more than 10gm, because of consumption of fried foods. 67% consumed higher calories because of high fat content, thus resulting in dietary imbalance. Majority of subjects consumed more than 120mg of calcium in form of milk. Milk was found to be daily part of morning meal. Those consuming tea couldn't meet this requirement 64% of subjects consumed less than recommended levels of iron.

Conclusion

Highly significant differences were observed between nutrient composition of breakfast eaters & skippers. Also educating them about importance of breakfast as a main meal, & its benefit, the type of food groups to be included is essential as they enter adolescence. It is important that they realize the consequences of skipping breakfast.

Limitations & Recommendations: larger sample size should have been chosen, & to be carried out in different parts of Mumbai to get more diverse results. Also, the information could be more reliable if the interviewer obtained the information.

Acknowledgments

None.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare there is no conflict of interest.