

Taste and trends: foreign students gender-based uncovered food habits

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Relevance- A shift from familiar environment to relocating abroad, reflects not just dietary shifts but also psychological stress. Reason maybe due to separation from familiar food, cultural disconnect and academic pressure. These stressors often prompt unhealthy eating habits like overindulging or restrictive eating to cope up mechanism ultimately leading to eating behavior disorders like obesity, anorexia nervosa. Aim: To analyse the gender based eating habits of students from India pursuing their medical degree in Russia. Materials and methods: Students were split into two groups -35 first year students (group 1) and 47 fifth year students(group 2), average age of each group being 19.38 ± 1.14 and 22.52 ± 1.93 respectively. Each group participants were separated on the basis of their gender. 21 male students (19.32 ± 1.15) and 14 female students (19.19 ± 1.08) in group 1 and 37 males (22.48 ± 2.11) and 10 females (23.00 ± 0.82) in group 2. To evaluate the eating habits we created a questionnaire which had parameters of tracking their nutrition throughout the day, it comprised of portion of meals, number of meals, hydration status etc. The research was conducted in three phases- in the beginning (Phase 1; P1), in middle (Phase 2; P2) and at the end of academic year (Phase 3; P3). Result: Number of meals per day increased over time, especially in group 1 boys, where 1-2 meals/day showed a significant increase (25%, 38%, 77%). Girls from group 1 showed a similar increase (29%, 58%, 65%). Senior boys showed a gradual increase (65%, 68%, 72%), whereas senior girls demonstrated a reverse trend (80%, 70%, 62%). About the largest meal, lunch was the most preferred in group 1 boys (55%, 54%, 67%) and group 1 girls (60%, 90%, 89%), the second preference being dinner. In contrast, both fifth year boys (51%, 95%, 57%) and girls (60%, 80%, 69%) preferred dinner throughout. Portion size patterns showed that medium portions were most preferred in junior boys (50%, 51%, 63%) and girls (57%, 37%, 45%), followed by small and then large portions. A similar trend was seen among group 2 boys (49%, 59%, 52%) and girls (60%, 80%, 46%). Hydration patterns revealed that first year boys consuming 1-2 L of water was decreased (60%, 44%, 33%), while first year girls showed a slight decline from 57% to 47% to 50% till P3. Fifth year boys decreased their intake from 11% to 5%, then increased to 37%. This adaptation even impacted their food preference as legume consumption (4-7 times/day) increased in group 1 boys (19%, 33%, 48%), but declined in group 1 girls (50%, 40%, 30%) and decreased in group 2 boys and girls reaching 13% and 17% respectively by P3. Conclusion: The research showed that there was an increase in the number of 1-2 meals/day in juniors during the academic year. Main meal preference for juniors was lunch and seniors preferred dinner. Medium portion meals were the first preferences for both the categories. Hydration patterns was seen fluctuating throughout the year. Legume consumption was increased only for junior boys whereas it saw decline for junior girls as well as the whole group 2. Summing up, these results show how the body adapts and reacts to such changes and how it hampers the eating habits. Improving it in early stages can help them prevent from future health problems.

Источники и литература

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