SURVEY ON KNOWLEDGE, PERCEPTION AND CONSUMPTION OF JUNK FOODS IN RELATION WITH OBESITY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The prevalence of obesity is a topic of concern in both developed and developing countries, particularly among adolescents where there is a growing concern that junk foods consumption may contribute to increasing obesity rates. Therefore, the present study was to evaluate the level of knowledge and perception on junk food and obesity and to assess the lifestyle practices among secondary school students. Besides, the correlation between consumption of junk food with obesity was also determined. A total of 217 students which comprised of 55.3 % of females and 44.7 % of males with age ranged from 15 to 18 years old from the non-science stream in Sekolah Menengah kebangsaan Taman Connaught participated in this study. Self-administered questionnaires were used as the research instrument to collect the data and anthropometric measurements were taken to calculate the body mass index (BMI) of students. The weight status of students were further categorised as underweight, normal weight, overweight and obese according to genders based on the BMI-for-age values. In this study, majority of the students (70.5 %) were normal weight, 12.4 % were overweight, 10.1 % were underweight and 6.9 % were considered as obese. In response to the overall knowledge, it was found that 43.8 % of students had moderate knowledge, 30.4 % had high knowledge while the remaining 25.8 % were categorised into the poor knowledge group. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient test demonstrated that no significant correlation was found between the junk food knowledge, obesity knowledge, as well as overall knowledge with BMI where the P values for all 3 categories were > 0.05. Moreover, no significant correlation was observed between consumption of ice-cream, potato chips, fast food, carbonated drinks and sweetened fruit juice with BMI. A significant positive correlation was observed between the consumption of sweetened coffee with BMI ($r_s = 0.149$, $p = 0.028$) whereas significant negative correlation was found between the consumption of chocolate, popcorns, baked products and sweets or candy with BMI.