



NUTRITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND YOGA PRACTICES AMONG COLLEGE GOING ADOLESCENT GIRLS

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ABSTRACT

Young girls are our strongest upholders since they will bear our future generation. It is critical that adolescent girls have sufficient nutritional reserves for the future. Nutrition knowledge plays a crucial role in shaping dietary habits, especially among young adults. Promoting nutrition knowledge and healthy eating habits among college students contributes to their overall well-being and has long-term effects on mental and physical health. As adolescents navigate the challenges of life, yoga can provide them with tools to find balance, reduce stress, and enhance both body and mind connect This study aims to investigate the nutritional knowledge and practice of yoga among college going adolescent girls. Additionally, the study seeks to emphasize the need of nutrition education and regular yoga practice for the holistic growth of college going girls. For the purpose, sixty-two young girls were randomly selected for the study from Dayanand Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Kurukshetra and Hindu Girls College, Jagadhri. The girls were fully informed of the purpose and procedure of the investigation and provided consent at the outset. Questionnaire was developed to assess the young girl's demographic profile, nutritional knowledge and yoga practices approach in life with the help of google form. The results were analysed using arithmetic mean and standard deviation. After submission of the questionnaire their nutritional knowledge was assessed and analysed. It was concluded from the present study that the good number of the studied subjects were aware that whole grains, fruits and vegetable are good for health but didn't know the health implications of excess intake of sugar and fat in the body. The surprising element of the study was that almost all the subjects felt that skipping meals is good for health. The practice of skipping meals is widespread among adolescents. Meal skipping increases throughout adolescence period as they try to lose weight through calorie restriction. The current study showed that not many subjects are practicing yoga regularly so as to bring any favourable results. Furthermore, they are not practicing under any expert guidance to get better understanding of the principles of yoga as from health point of view the subjects must know the health implication of yoga and physical activity. As nutritious diet and yoga/ physical activity are two inseparable parameters of healthy life so they must be taken more seriously in guiding these young girls for future.

Key Words: Nutritional Knowledge, Yoga Practice, Adolescent, Young Girl

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical life stage characterized by puberty wherein an individual undergoes various physical, physiological, sexual, emotional and social changes. It is often considered as a period of stress and storm marked with identity crisis¹. Adolescents experience many stressors in their daily lives including peer pressure, adjustment problems, amplification of sex consciousness, over expectation, academics, poor memory, overload of studies, fear of failure in exam and many more. As a result, they are faced with adjustment problems with parents, school discipline, the community and they are unable to strike a chord between their mind and body, their emotions go haywire which results in stress².

Mood swings, difficulty in sleeping, increased negativity, fatigue, lack of enthusiasm, lack of clarity and concentration, poor memory, unhealthy eating pattern, social withdrawal are some of the consequences of stressful life. Substance use, self-harm, suicides and delinquency are large-scale problems that crops up as a result of prolonged distressed experiences by the adolescents. They experiment with drugs or alcohol to improve their mood, reduce negative feelings or to avoid social rejections³.

It needs to be understood that stress symptoms are not something to be feared of but it definitely gives an indication that things need to be managed effectively and life energy need to be re-directed so that adolescents lead a healthy and a meaningful life⁴. As adolescents navigate the challenges of life, yoga can provide them with tools to find balance, reduce stress, and enhance both body and mind connect⁵.

According to a national study conducted in the United States, stress and anxiety are the biggest obstacles to both personal wellness and academic performance of adolescents⁶. Conley and colleagues (2018)⁷, found that during the first two years of college, students had higher rates of depression, lower levels of self-esteem, lower levels of active emotional coping, and lower levels of social support from friends. This finding underscores the need for intervention programs, particularly during the transitional period. Adolescents need to develop the ability to effectively manage their mind and emotions, eliminate stress and promote harmony.

Nutritional knowledge and practice are critical components of an individual's total health and well-being. Yoga and good eating habits have long been considered to have beneficial effects on health. Yoga is not limited to doing asana; in fact, the true purpose of practicing yoga is learning skills to be responsible in life. Yoga is a wonderful way of guiding them into healthy lifestyle. It promotes creativity, builds stamina and confidence, helps them focus on their studies better and teaches them how to manage stressful situations⁸. Yoga can be the key intervention which can help to channelize the energy of adolescents and make them realize their true potential. Assessing nutritional knowledge and the degree to which one adopts yoga practice in day-to-day life provide opportunities for evolving further education and training programmes. This study aims to investigate the nutritional knowledge and practices of yoga among college going adolescent girls.

METHODOLOGY

Subjects: Sixty-two young girls were randomly selected for the study from Dayanand Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Kurukshetra and Hindu Girls College, Jagadhri. The girls were fully informed of the purpose and procedure of the investigation and provided consent at the outset.

Questionnaire Development: Questionnaire was developed to assess the young girl's demographic profile, nutritional knowledge and yoga practices approach in life with the help of Google form. The questionnaire included two sections; the nutritional knowledge section includes eleven questions and yoga practice section includes six questions respectively.

Statistical Analysis: The results were analysed using arithmetic mean and standard deviation.

Procedure: Questionnaire was shared with the selected participants to know their demographic profile, nutritional knowledge and yoga practices on an assigned day in a room. They were also informed of the purpose and procedure of the investigation. After submission of the questionnaire their nutritional knowledge and the degree to which they practice yoga in day-to-day life was assessed and analysed.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Demographic profile: All the subjects were studying in undergraduate courses in Dayanand Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Kurukshetra and Hindu Girls College, Jagadhri. The results (Table 1) showed that the mean height of the subjects was $1.56.5\pm 6.08\text{cm}$ and weight was $47.30\pm 8.22\text{kg}$. According to the present height and weight of the studied subjects their calculated mean BMI was $19.81\pm 3.04\text{kg/m}^2$.

Table 1: Anthropometric Measurements

Parameters	Mean±S.D.
Age (years)	17.38±1.74
Height(cm)	156.5±6.08
Weight(kg)	47.30±8.22
BMI(Kg/m ²)	19.81±3.04

Table 2 revealed that almost all (98.39 per cent) the participants were vegetarian. About 35.48 per cent of the respondents were aware of the fact that refined flours are not good for health. Although 56.46 per cent of the subjects answered that refined flours are good for the health, majority (98.39 per cent) of the subjects know that whole grains and pulses are good for health. Ninety-five per cent of the respondent revealed that eating a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables are good for health. According to 98.39 per cent of the subjects, eating a lot of sugar is good for health while eating fat rich diet was denied by 56.46 per cent of them. Among the selected participants 66.14 per cent of them were aware, that eating excess of packed food causes hypertension. Similarly, 64.53 per cent of the subjects responded that eating lots of sweets is the only cause of diabetes. Majority (96.77 per cent) of the subjects revealed that skipping meals is good for health.

The present study revealed that college girls had a limited grasp of food and nutrition-related knowledge. Meal skipping increases throughout adolescence period as they try to lose weight through calories restriction.⁹

In fact, research studies indicate that adolescents are consuming an excessive number of unhealthy snacks, including chocolates, chips, candies, and sugar-filled carbonated drinks at meal times¹⁰. Furthermore, fast food options like pizza, burgers, hot dogs, noodles and momos are becoming more and more popular among adolescents, maybe because of their preferences, convenience, and peer pressure.¹¹

Table 2: Responses Related to Nutritional Knowledge Among College Going Girls

Parameter	Responses (n)	Number (N=62)	Percentage (n/N×100)
What kind of diet you prefer	Vegetarian	61	98.39
	Nonvegetarian	01	1.61
Refined Flours are good for Health	Yes	35	56.46
	No	22	35.48
	Don't Know	05	8.06
Whole grains and pluses ae good for health	Yes	61	98.39
	No	01	1.61
	Don't Know	0	0
Eating a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables are good for health	Yes	59	95.16
	No	02	3.23
	Don't Know	01	1.61
Eating a lot of sugar is good for health	Yes	61	98.39
	No	01	1.61
	Don't Know	0	0
Eating a fat rich diet is good for health	Yes	26	41.93
	No	35	56.46
	Don't Know	01	1.61

Eating excess of packed food causes hypertension	Yes	41	66.14
	No	16	25.80
	Don't Know	05	8.06
Eating lots of sweets is the only cause of diabetes	Yes	40	64.53
	No	19	30.64
	Don't Know	03	4.83
Skipping meals is good for health	Yes	60	96.77
	No	02	3.23
	Don't Know	00	0
Is breakfast is a compulsory meal	Yes	60	96.77
	No	02	3.23
	Don't Know	0	0
Proper hydration is important to maintain digestive system health	Yes	60	96.77
	No	02	3.23
	Don't Know	0	0

As a result, the current findings raise the idea that one of the main objectives when developing and implementing nutrition-promoting programs, especially with this group as the target, should be nutrition education. 96.77per cent of the respondents responded that breakfast is a compulsory meal and proper hydration is important to maintain digestive system health respectively. Breakfast intake rates among Indian college students were found to be 47.8 per cent in Amritha et al., (2019)¹², 63.8 per cent in Jeneta et al., (2016)¹³, and 80 per cent in Amruth et al., (2019)¹⁴ in previous studies respectively. Globally, a wide range of breakfast consumption patterns was reported among university students, ranging from 48.1 per cent to 87.6 per cent (Javaid, 2020)¹⁵.

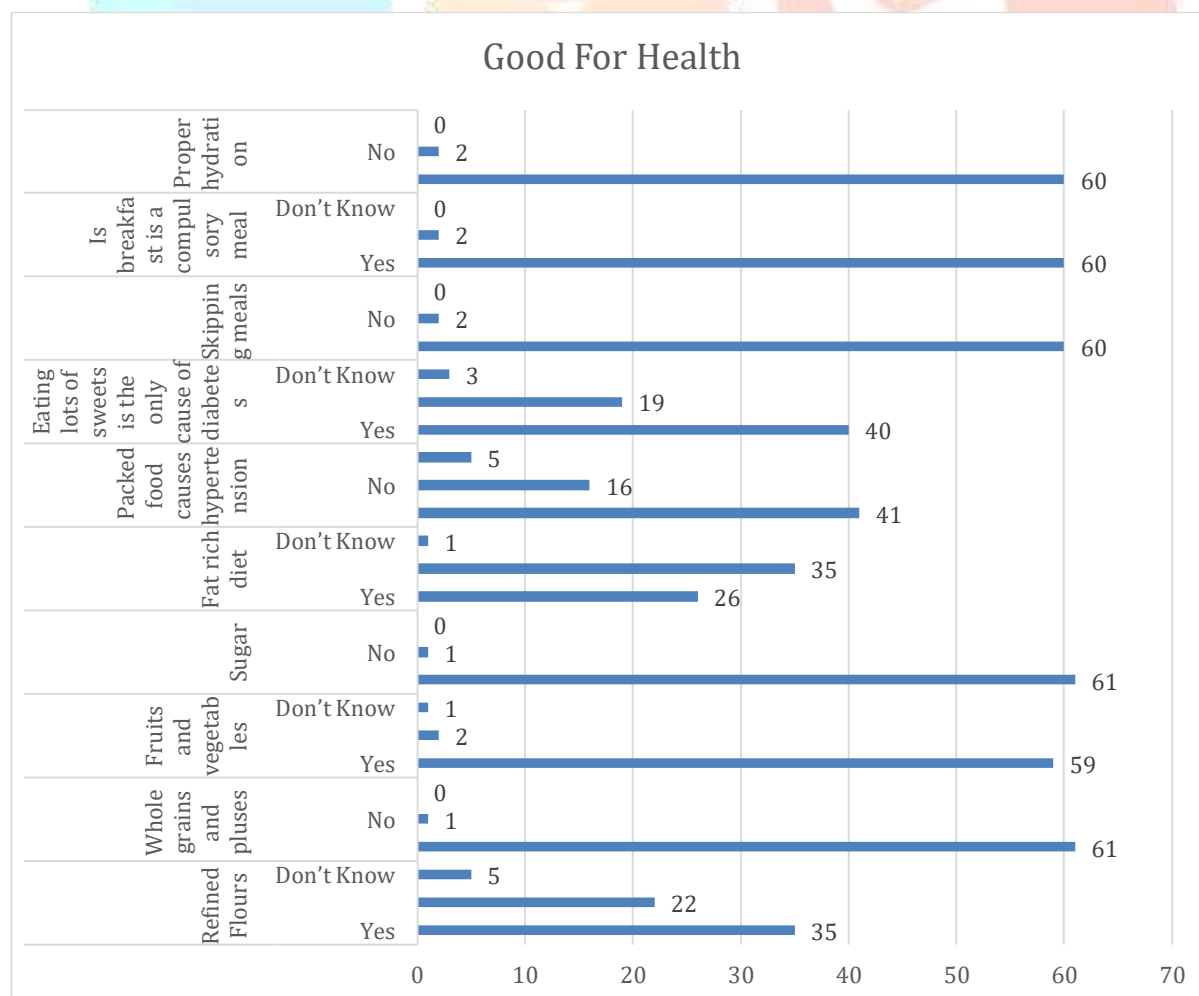


Fig 1: Responses Related to Nutritional Knowledge Among College Going Girls

Responses related to yoga practices among the college going girls is presented in Table 3. Among the studied subjects 32.27 per cent of the subjects were practicing yoga once a week followed by 22.58 per cent thrice a week and 16.12 per cent daily in past 6 months respectively. However, 29.03 per cent of the subjects didn't practiced yoga in past six months. These responses clearly reveal that there is an urgent need to make the young generation understand the importance of practicing and including yoga in their daily routine. Regular practice of yoga promotes strength, endurance, flexibility and facilitates characteristics of friendliness, compassion, and greater self-control, while cultivating a sense of calmness and well-being. Sustained practice also leads to important outcomes such as changes in life perspective, self-awareness and an improved sense of energy to live life fully. Yoga is a wonderful way of guiding adolescents into healthy lifestyle⁸.

Majority (75.82 per cent) of the subjects rest 15 minutes in between yoga sessions followed by 30 min (17.74 per cent) and 1 hour (1.61 per cent) while 4.83 per cent were not rest in between the yoga session. About 69.35 per cent of the subjects were practicing yoga at home whereas only 4.85 per cent were go to yoga centre. Majority (91.94 per cent) of the subjects were involved in physical activity like walking, heavy exercises and alike apart from yoga. Almost all (96.80 per cent) of the respondents responded that they were not involved in any kind of abusive practices like drugs or faulty medicines. Approximately 66.15 per cent of the subjects were found change in themselves within the past six months that is from when they have started practicing yoga. The result is in line with the study conducted by Watt et al., (2018)¹⁶ where they showed yoga as an intervention can improve weight related health of young adults through healthier eating patterns and physical activity.

Table 3: Responses Related to Yoga Practices Among College Going Girls

Parameter	Responses (n)	Number (N=62)	Percentage (n/N×100)
How frequent you have practiced yoga in past 6 months	Daily	10	16.12
	Thrice a week	14	22.58
	Once a week	20	32.27
	Not done at all	18	29.03
How much rest you body need between yoga session	15 min	47	75.82
	30 min	11	17.74
	1 hour	01	1.61
	No rest	03	4.83
What is the source of practicing Yoga Asanas/Pranayama for you? Do you do it yourself or go to yoga centre?	Yoga center/ Part	03	4.85
	At home	43	69.35
	Online classes	00	0
	I don't Practice	16	25.80
Apart from yoga are you involved in any physical activity like walking, heavy exercises and alike	Yes	57	91.94
	No	01	1.61
	Sometimes	04	6.45
Are you involved in any kind of abusive practices like drugs or faulty medicines?	Yes	02	3.20
	No	60	96.80
	Sometimes	00	0
Have you noticed any kind of change in yourself within the past six months ie., from when you have started practicing yoga?	Yes	41	66.15
	No	6	9.67
	Partial	6	9.67
	Not Applicable	9	14.51

CONCLUSION

Adolescents' nutritional and health conditions need special consideration because they will make up the future generation of the nation. It was concluded from the present study that the good number of the studied subjects were aware that whole grains, fruits and vegetable are good for health but didn't know the health implications of sugar and fat excess intake on the body. The surprising element of the study was that almost all the subjects

felt that skipping meals is good for health. The practice of skipping meals is widespread among adolescents. Meal skipping increases throughout adolescence period as they try to lose weight through calorie restriction. Moreover, young girls' skip meals just because they want lean and attractive body without knowing the nutritional deficiency diseases related with the practice. It is the current need that young girls get education about nutrients and the impact of excess and deficient intake of these nutrients on health. The current study showed that not many subjects are practicing yoga regularly so as to bring any favourable results. Furthermore, they are not practicing under any expert guidance to get better understanding of the principles of yoga as from health point of view the subjects must know the health implication of yoga and physical activity. As nutritious diet and yoga/ physical activity are two inseparable parameters of healthy life so they must be taken more seriously in guiding these young girls for future. Additionally, the study seeks to emphasize the need of nutrition education and regular yoga practice for the holistic growth of college going adolescent girls.

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