

## Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Nutrition: Adolescents Study

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### How to cite this article:

E Lakshmi. Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Nutrition: Adolescents Study. Int J Food Nutr Diet. 2020;8(1):15-18.

### Abstract

Nutrition counseling is a process by which beliefs, attitudes, environmental influences and knowledge about food and health are channelized into actual practices. They help improve the nutritional status so that children contribute in the well-being of the nation as they are the future of the nation's prosperity. *Aims:* To assess the Impact of nutrition education on children and Impact of counseling (KAP) imparted to teachers and parents. The study was approved by the Institutional ethics committee of SRM University (1165/IEC/2017). Permission was obtained from school authorities parents and teachers. *Statistical analysis used:* Descriptive statistical measures such as percentage distribution, mean and standard deviation was used for variables, *t*-test was used to compare KAP before and after counseling. *Conclusions:* The improvement in attitude was seen in terms of preference for nutritious foods compared to junk foods, consumption of more vegetables and fruits and in the choice of suitable recreational activities

**Keywords:** KAP; Nutrition Counseling; Junk food.

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### Introduction

Nutrition counselling is a process by which beliefs, attitudes, environmental influences and knowledge about food and health are channelized into actual practices. These practices are sound and consistent with the individual needs, purchasing power, food availability, health and socio cultural background. It is one of the most effective tool of changing the food habits without affecting their sentiments.<sup>1</sup>

Nutrition counseling regarding the importance of balanced diet, harmful effects of junk foods will help to curb the junk food addiction and improving their nutritional status.

Knowledge is a set of understandings, It is also one's capacity for imagining, one's way of perceiving. Knowledge of a health behaviour considered to be beneficial, however, does not automatically mean that this behaviour will be followed. The degree of knowledge assessed by the survey helps to locate areas where information and education efforts remain to be exerted Attitude is a way of being, a position. These are leanings or tendencies".<sup>2</sup> This is an intermediate variable between the situation and the response to this situation. Practices helps explain that among the possible practices for a subject submitted to a stimulus, that subject adopts one practice and not another.

An attempt was made to bring about a change in the nutritional profile through nutrition counseling of the adolescents and knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of teachers and mothers to promote

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**Received on** 18.12.2019, **Accepted on** 28.01.2020

the consumption of foods like cereals, pulses, green leafy vegetables, roots and tubers, sugar and jaggery, fats and oil, milk and milk products, fruits etc. in the childrens diet. To improve their nutritional status so that children contribute in the well-being of the nation as children are the future of the nation's prosperity.<sup>3</sup>

The practices of children in the form of improved choice for good quality and perfect quantity of foods consumed is important. Inclusion of more vegetables and fruits in the diet, improved physical activity and reduction in television viewing time are also of important and urgent need.

According to Monde (2011) a KAP survey means Knowledge, Attitude and Practices. To properly carry out this type of survey it is important to establish a basic premise and provide definitions for each word.<sup>4</sup>

## Materials and Methods

Framing of Schedule for KAP (10 questions on knowledge, attitude and practice of yes/No). Real time questions were framed on nutrition practices. Score card were used to evaluate KAP twice, both pre and post intervention, in order to measure the impact of nutrition education. The validated KAP questionnaire was distributed to all the mothers and teachers, at the beginning of the study and explained about the questions included.

## Results

The socio-economic status as depicted in Table 1 revealed that majority (90.79 %) of the adolescents were non vegetarian. A higher percentage (76.96) of adolescents were from nuclear family. It was further observed that a higher percentage (24.88) of fathers were high school educated and about 23.98 per cent had technical qualification.

**Table 1:** Distribution of adolescents according to demographic profile

Demographic variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	13-14 yrs	96	44.24
	15-16 yrs	65	29.95
	17-18 yrs	56	25.81
Type of Family	Nuclear Family	167	76.96
	Joint Family	38	17.51
	Extended Family	12	5.53
Dietary Pattern	Vegetarian	20	9.21
	Non Vegetarian	197	90.79
Religion	Hindu	170	78.34
	Muslim	11	05.06
	Christian	33	15.22
	Others	3	01.38
Father's Education	Illiterate	27	12.44
	Primary School Certificate	42	19.35
	Middle School Certificate	42	19.35
	High School Certificate	54	24.88
	Diploma/Technical	52	23.98
Family Income per month	₹2690-5700	24	11.06
	₹5701-8800	44	20.28
	₹8801-10800	54	24.88
	₹10801-15700	73	33.65
	₹>15700	22	10.13
Monthly food expenditure	₹501-780	16	07.37
	₹781-1200	32	14.75
	₹1201-1400	54	24.88
	₹1401-1600	58	26.73
	₹>1600	57	26.27

Family educational level and socioeconomic status have a marked effect on children's lifestyles and dietary habits.<sup>5</sup>

### Adolescents

Improvement in knowledge was seen in terms of nutrient content of foods, daily food and nutrient requirements, types of foods needed by the body, quantity of foods consumed, ill effects of junk foods, health and hygiene aspects. The improvement in attitude was seen in terms of preference for nutritious foods compared to junk

foods, consumption of more vegetables and fruits and in the choice of suitable recreational activities. The practices of adolescents in the form of improved choice for good quality and perfect quantity of foods consumed, inclusion of more vegetables and fruits in the diet and improved physical activity. Nutrition counselling is an effective tool of changing the food habits without affecting their sentiments.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 2:** Mean percentage scores KAP obtained by the selected adolescents.

Criteria	Before	After	t-value
Knowledge	63.21 ± 18.97	89.76 ± 11.21	51.12 < 0.0001
Attitude	58.46 ± 16.34	71.15 ± 24.12	18.48 < 0.0001
Practices	28.91 ± 14.25	8.31 ± 22.12	79.65 < 0.0001

### Teachers

The knowledge of the teachers on the physical growth of children, deficiency symptoms, nutrient requirements, sanitation of the environment and personal hygiene of children showed a marked improvement after counseling.

The attitude of the teachers in deciding to supervise the food habits of adolescents.<sup>7</sup> The

practices of talking to students about good food habits, stressing on the habit of eating vegetables and fruits among the adolescents, monitoring their height and weight, deficiencies, if any and enhancing their sanitary practices in the form of proper sanitary training and hand washing showed marked improvement which was found to be statistically significant

**Table 3:** Mean percentage scores KAP obtained by the Teachers

Criteria	Before	After	t value
Knowledge	46.32 ± 16.31	81.65 ± 18.13	22.91 < 0.0001
Attitude	39.13 ± 13.97	86.71 ± 13.12	39.25 < 0.0001
Practices	38.12 ± 12.54	87.11 ± 11.12	46.21 < 0.0001

### Mothers

Improvement in knowledge was found to be significant at one per cent level. Improvements in knowledge regarding food groups, nutrients

required for the children, food allergies, food restrictions and food fads and fallacies improved. effective tool of changing the food habits without affecting their sentiments.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 4:** Mean percentage scores KAP obtained by the mothers

Criteria	Before	After	t value
Knowledge	33.34 ± 16.32	79.13 ± 16.14	31.5 < 0.0001
Attitude	28.31 ± 15.92	76.91 ± 23.11	27.4 < 0.0001
Practices	18.43 ± 14.86	79.41 ± 21.34	37.1 < 0.0001

### Conclusion

Significant improvements in attitude of parents in providing breakfast for their children, inclusion of more vegetables and fruits, restricting junk foods and the importance of physical activity were observed. Parents showed a change in practices to target better health for their children by restricting usage of saturated fats, fried snacks and including more sprouted grams, salads and nuts. Better

methods of cooking and reduced frequency of consumption of outside food by the families were also noticed.

**Key Messages:** The practices of children in the form of improved choice for good quality and perfect quantity of foods consumed is important. Inclusion of more vegetables and fruits in the diet, improved physical activity and reduction in television viewing time are also of important and urgent need.

**Acknowledgement:** I thank the School authorities, parents and students for the support rendered towards the study.

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