



**INCREASING TREND OF JUNK FOOD USE IN COLLEGE STUDENTS AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

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**ABSTRACT**

To do a survey and find out the reach of junk foods among the college going students and to create awareness among the college students about junk food and its health implications. The questionnaire consist of 20 questions and the sample size was taken for 100 college students. Junk foods are loaded with lots of fat, sugar, calories, salt and carbs and therefore are not very healthy. Eating excessive amount of junk food leads to obesity and malnutrition. It also cuts down the energy levels of the body. Junk foods contain high amount of oil and fat and therefore our body finds it difficulty to digest. This survey concludes the students to be less aware of the ill effects of junk foods.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The term ‘Junk food’ was termed by Michael Jacobson. Junk food is produced with high level of refined sugar, white flour, polyunsaturated fats, salts and numerous food additives but lacking in protein, vitamin and fibres. Junk food is popular because of their simplicity of manufacture, consumption and good taste. There is increasing trend of junk food use which is combined with lavish life style, high prevalence of obesity, diabetes mellitus, hypertension and coronary heart disease, which is harmful to health and will aggravate existing life style diseases in students. [1] The common junk foods include fast food items, chips, candy, gum, sweet desserts as well as alcoholic beverages. [9] Consumption of energy dense foods especially sweetened beverages like fruit drinks, carbonated soft drinks and energy drinks may lead to type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular risk. [3] The frequency of fast-food intake was not found to be significantly associated with perceived healthfulness of such food. [3] Trends including fast food consumption and such dietary behaviours are associated with increased weight gain from adolescence to adulthood. Ill effects of regular intake of junk foods cause lack of energy, poor concentration and obesity leading to inferiority complex, depression, heart diseases, high cholesterol, stunted growth, premature ageing, and tooth decay as per [2]. [4] The negative effects of consumption of excess salt containing junk foods on health include increase in blood pressure and decrease in

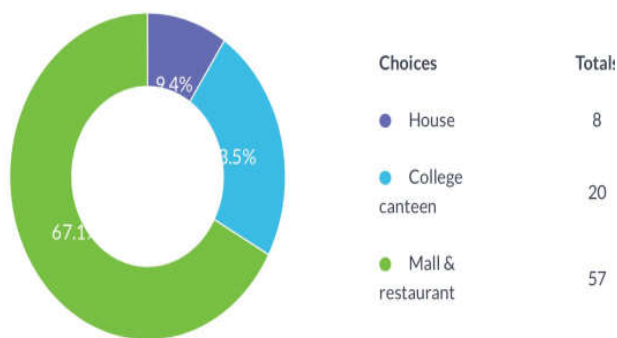
containing food additives causes’ serious health effects on people with renal disorders. [8] Sometimes food additives are added to junk food to increase the shelf life, taste and also to preserve it from microbial contamination. The internal barriers to nutritional change include negative perceptions of eating healthy, the decreased taste, difficulty in changing familiar eating habits, eating for comfort, and the priority to mental health. [7] High salt content foods can be addictive substances that stimulate the dopamine receptors in the brain, leading to increase in craving and hunger. [10] It leads to increased appetite, calorie consumption, overeating, obesity and related illness.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

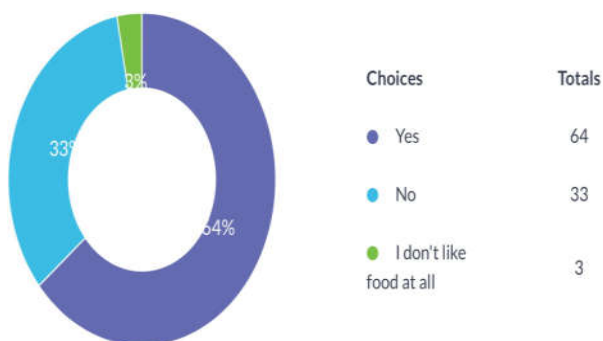
A study was conducted among 100 college going students of the age group 18-22 with the help of a survey containing 20 questions and prior to this the students were given a brief overview about junk foods and their ill health effects. They were given time to answer their responses and by the help of the data collected the respective results were concluded.

Initially, the students were asked if they preferred eating junk food and 64% of the students preferred eating junk foods. Next when they were enquired about the place where they consumed more junk food, the responses were 71% of the students responded that they ate more junk foods only at malls and restaurants and 20% of the students ate junk foods at college or school canteen whereas only 9% said that they were more exposed to junk foods at Home. And finally through this survey 92% of the had knowledge about the health implications caused by junk foods.

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Fast food has become a prominent feature of the diet of children in India and, increasingly, throughout the world. The results of this study is in line with the findings of Satia *et al.*, [6] who reported that responders who reported usual/often eating at fast-food restaurants were more often the younger generation and the main cause of such situation is the developmental factors that include more time spent with peers, independence in meal selection and this study also finds maximum students to be fond of junk foods and 33% of the students were not interested in junk foods. [11] Junkfoods cause various types of cancers such as stomach cancer, breast cancer in women, colorectal cancer etc 64% of the students agreed that junk foods caused cancer in the longer run whereas 21% of the students were not aware that cancers are now predominant because of junk foods. More number of respondents were now aware that cancer could be caused due to consumption of junk food. The findings of this study corresponds with the findings of Chibber [2] who reported that the ill effects of regular intake of junk foods are mainly lack of energy, poor concentration and obesity leading to inferiority complex, depression, heart diseases, high cholesterol, stunted growth, premature ageing, and tooth decay and 67% of the students were aware that junk foods caused heart disease and 22% disagreed to this fact saying that junk food can cause damage to the heart and 10% of the students were not actually sure about it. This study finds 57% of the students still consumed junk foods even after knowing that junk food caused type 2 diabetes. 65% of the students were aware that junk foods caused hypertension and hyper cholesterol ailments.



**CONCLUSION**

The focus of my finding include the views of adolescents on junk foods, individual preferences, consumption rates and familiarity regarding the harmful health effects of overconsumption of junk food products. From our study we have identified certain factors responsible for increased eating

habits of junk food include the new unhealthy trends introduced in the foods that we get these days and another factor that supports the sales of these foods is that they are available cheap and they are tasty too it would be recommended that if high taxes were imposed on these foods the consumption of healthy foods may rise to an extent thereby promoting healthy living. There is a defiant need for the young generation of teens to understand the facts and various complications caused by junk foods.

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