

Psycho-Social Determinants of Skipping Breakfast Habit among Medical Students

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: To know about the frequency of skipping breakfast habit among medical students of (ANMC), and their psycho-social determinants. **Methodology:** Descriptive and Cross Sectional study conducted on small population of MBBS students of ANMC 80 students were interviewed by using convenient sampling technique. **Results:** Data from 80 respondents (40 males, 40 females) were used for analysis. Fifty one percent (51.3%) students were not taking breakfast. Reason for skipping their breakfast in 25 % students was non availability. According to the students, who were having trend of taking breakfast, 48.8% have readily available breakfast, 46.3% feel drowsy during lecture, 35% fresh during lecture and 18.8 % lazy. Fifty six percent (56.3%) students were having more than 75% overall attendance. Eighty percent (80%) students passed their last annual examination in first attempt. **Conclusion:** This study suggests that the medical students skip breakfast due to the non-availability of breakfast that can cause detriment of their studies. To correct this university should provide breakfast to their students, especially to boarders.

Keyword: breakfast, habit, psycho-social determinants.

INTRODUCTION

The first meal that is usually taken early in the morning after waking up from the night's sleep and before starting of daily routine work is called breakfast. Breakfast is considered as the most important meal of the day due to its benefits for the health and development of children and adults. Skipping breakfast is regarded as a bad habit. On a side note, it is important to know that a repeated behavioral routine which is likely to occur instinctively is called habit.

Bad eating habits are a major public health concern among young adults who experienced shifting into university life¹ and in that they are exposed to stress and lack of time². Environmental factors also contribute in taking up of unhealthy eating habits among university students³. University students are inclined to make their own food choices⁴ based on cost of food and availability of fast food⁵. Previous studies revealed that university students failed to meet the recommended intakes of fruits and vegetables^{6, 7}. University students had frequent snacking habits⁸ and had a higher frequency of fast food consumption⁹. The provision of energy and nutrients throughout the day is exceedingly important and breakfast has been considered an important dietary factor for energy regulation. Furthermore, in the 1980s, some studies reported that breakfast could play an important role in the prevention of grown-up chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and osteoporosis¹⁰. Adding up, for university students, breakfast eating is associated with a range of positive outcomes which includes better organizational attendance, university performance, nutrient intake, health, fitness, and suitable body weight¹¹.

Skipping breakfast has been linked with adverse effects

on cognitive function, recall and memory academic performance, school attendance, psychosocial function, and mood in children and young people¹². In addition, decreased breakfast energy intake is directly associated with higher entire daily energy intake; ¹³ once breakfast is skipped it can be difficult to well balance it later in the day¹⁴.

OBJECTIVES

1. To know about the frequency of skipping breakfast habit among medical students of Azra Naheed Medical College (ANMC).
2. To find the psycho-social determinants e.g.: academic performance, attendance, psycho-social functions and mood among Medical students.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive and Cross Sectional on small population conducted with MBBS students of ANMC. 80 students were interviewed by using convenient sampling technique. Inclusion Criteria: 1st year to 4th year MBBS students, who are admitted, registered in ANMC, regular and Pakistani national. Exclusion Criteria: 1st year to 4th year students who are foreign national, migratory students, observers, not registered with ANMC, students doing their electives in ANMC.

RESULTS

A total of eighty (80) respondents were participated in the investigation, consisting of 40(50%) males and 40(50%) females. 10 males and 10 females from each class (1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year and 4th year). The age range of respondents of the study was 17 to 26 years. Majority of respondents (n=46.3, 46.3%) were 20 to 21 years of age. 50% of respondents were living in hostel, 50 % lived with their parents. Majority of the respondents were having family members 4 (n=21, 26.3%).

Fifty one percent (51.3%) respondents were not taking

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breakfast and the main reason for skipping their breakfast was (25%) non-availability of breakfast. According to the students who were having trend of taking breakfast, since they have readily available breakfast (48.8%). Eighty six percent (86.3%) students were having family trend of doing breakfast. Forty two & half percent (42.5%) fathers' occupation was self-employed, 30% professional, 10% land lord, 5% govt. servant and 12.5% was others. Eighty percent (80%) mothers were house wives. Majority of the students were having frequency of skipping breakfast days/week less than 2 (48.8%). Fifty percent (50%) done their dinner by 9 o'clock. Most of the students (about 45 %) wakeup by alarm. Sixty percent (60%) students were not having morning exercise and 40% were having exercises 1-2 days/week (20%). Fifty four percent (53.8%) students wake up less than 1 hour before leaving for the studies. Seventy two & half percent (72.5%) respondents think they are normal, 12.5% are over-weight and 15 % are obese. Forty six percent (46.3%) felt drowsy during lecture, 35% fresh during lecture and 18.8 % lazy. Majority of students (56.3%) are having more than 75% overall attendance and 80% students passed their last annual examination in first attempt. When chi-Square test was applied, it was found that there is no significant difference in the frequency of taking breakfast among male and female students. ($X^2:6.054$, $df:1$, $p=0.014$)

This gross difference of morning exercise among male and female students was also found to be statistically significant when Pearson Chi-Square was applied to the data ($X^2:7.50$, $df:1$, $p=0.006$). Which is quite aligned with our cultural settings where females are less supposed to opt such habits like morning exercise.

DISCUSSION

Our research was to determine the psycho-social determinants of skipping breakfast habit among medical students. Most of the previous studies were based on single variable e.g. obesity, academic performance, loss of concentration etc. and some of these studies was not conducted on Pakistani medical students. We have conducted our study in Pakistan, Lahore and we have considered effects of skipping breakfast as doing breakfast or not, if no then reason, family trend of doing breakfast, dinner timings, doing exercise or not, wake up timing before leaving for studies, attendance and academic performance. A study was conducted in Australia on adolescent breakfast skipping, indicated that approximately 12% of the sample skipped breakfast. Similarly in another study conducted among Greek high school adolescents, the prevalence of breakfast skipping was 29.4%. In our study 51.3% students do not take their breakfast and the main reason is non-availability of breakfast (48.8%). In Ghana medical school shows the prevalence of breakfast skipping among females was significantly higher (74.56%) than in males (70.44%). In a study amongst adolescents in schools in Queensland, 23% aged 16–18 years have breakfast less than five times per week. Their results also suggest that the older the cohort the more likely participants were to skip breakfast. In our study

the prevalence of breakfast skipping at least less than twice a week was high, about 48.8 %.The reasons given for skipping breakfast are not different from what other studies reported. In a study among undergraduates in a public university in Kuala, the reasons the students gave for skipping breakfast were more of personal choice such as no time to eat, did not like to eat early, no appetite or oversleeping. The major reason for our students skipping breakfast is that of non-availability of breakfast. This study confirmed our observation that lack of breakfast contributed to drowsiness and lack of concentration along with the clinical students. Although there was no significant association between the numbers of times breakfast skipped, overall over 46.3% of the medical students confirmed that they felt drowsy, about 18.8% lazy.

CONCLUSION

This study suggests that the medical students skip breakfast due to the non-availability of breakfast that can cause detrimental effect on their studies. To correct this, it is expedient for the university to provide breakfast to their students especially hostel residents.

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