

A Study on Traditional Dietary Pattern and its impact on Health Status of the Elderly People

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ABSTRACT

Indian traditional foods is considered as functional foods as it contains high amounts of dietary fibre (whole grains and vegetables), antioxidants (spices, fruits, and vegetables), and probiotics (curds and fermented batter products), which are best choices for health promotion. These foods help in weight management and blood sugar level balance and support immunity of the body. The study aimed to determine the socio economic status, lifestyle pattern, health profile, anthropometric and biochemical assessment, clinical signs, nutritional status and traditional dietary pattern of the elderly in rural area and to analyse the impact of traditional foods towards the health status of the elderly. The study was conducted in Hanumanthanapuram village of Kancheepuram district, Tamil Nadu, India. The study design adopted in the present study was descriptive study. A total sample of about 100 elderly (50 males and 50 females) was selected on the basis of purposive sampling method and the data was collected by using questionnaire as a tool and analysed by SPSS software version 14. The finding of the study showed that the mean and standard deviation of body mass index of male and female subjects was found to be 23.2 ± 2.55 and 24.08 ± 2.08 and the mean and standard deviation of hemoglobin level (secondary data) of male and female subjects was found to be 13.42 ± 0.84 and 11.37 ± 1.17 . A consumption of ragi, rice, pulses and vegetables were routinely taken by the elderly, but very less consumption of fruits were taken by them. The Karl Pearson's correlation of traditional foods and health problems was found to be significant positively correlated and the student's t-test of health problems based on lifestyle pattern was found to be highly significant ($p < 0.05$) and the student's t-test of gender based on nutrient intake was found to be highly significant ($P < 0.05$). The study concluded that after consuming traditional foods and having a good lifestyle pattern, the elderly were facing a minimal health related issues, so consumption of such traditional foods has a role in preventing diseases.

Key Words: Traditional Foods, Elderly, Nutritional Status, Lifestyle Pattern, Health Profile