

Beliefs of Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyle among Women in a Hospital Setting

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1. Abstract

Objective: Evaluate beliefs of nutrition and healthy lifestyle among a cohort of women.

Methods: Between May and October 2012, women approached at a tertiary care Centre, completed a voluntary questionnaire regarding eating habits, nutritional intake and physical activity.

Results: One thousand women completed questionnaire, majority were pregnant (73%). Only 45% consumed three meals per day, 70% did not eat breakfast, 48% ate dessert every day, 74% did not partake in any exercise and 62% took vitamins. Only 54% of the participants read the ingredients on food labeling. The majority (78%) of participants believed that pregnant women were required to double their food intake, and 59% did not know they need specific dietary requirements. Fifty-nine percent of the participants also believed that a healthy diet consisted of regular meals of fruit, vegetables, proteins and grains, and 60% believed that the five food groups were fat, protein, grains, dairy products, and fruit and vegetables. The vast majority (98%) of participants wanted to learn more about healthy eating and lifestyle habits.

Conclusions: Significant proportions of women exhibit an unhealthy lifestyle habits, and had misconceptions regarding the constituents of a healthy lifestyle, and the additional dietary requirements that are recommended during pregnancy.

2. Keywords

Healthy eating; Nutrition; Physical activity; Preconception; Women