

Received : January, 2011; Accepted : February, 2011

Association of eating behaviour with anaemia among female hostelites

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to find out the eating behaviour of hostel students which could lead to anaemia. Mild- moderate anaemia was prevalent in 50% of the subjects with mean haemoglobin value as 10.88 ± 1.93 . Majority of the subjects were overweight or obese. There was a relationship between severity of anaemia and iron and protein intake. Poor dietary intake was observed, which had an impact on the nutritional status. Prevalence of anaemia among women hostelites highlights the importance of nutritional counselling not only to patients but also vulnerable groups like hostelites especially women to improve eating habits at least to stabilise the condition if not worsen.

Agarwal, Deepa, Supriya, V., Muthulakshmi, G. and Gopalan, T.R. (2011). Association of eating behaviour with anaemia among female hostelites, *Food Sci. Res. J.*, 2 (1) : 37-39.

Key words : Anaemia, Anthropometry, Biochemical parameters

INTRODUCTION

Students living in hostels are a distinct group of students who have unique needs and problems. They have particular physical, social and emotional characteristics. They are away from home for the first time and have to learn to manage their own affairs, and adjust to new conditions of living without a family member of greater experience to guide them. Also students who live independently are subject to less parental control that can inhibit unhealthy behaviour. Such students are more prone to poor eating habits, increased fast food consumption leading to lack of inappropriate intake of essential nutrients, lack of sleep, or the acquisition of new habits. All these factors do not contribute positively to the development of a healthy lifestyle. Thus, the idea was perceived as to find out the eating behaviour of hostel students which could lead to anaemia, so that appropriate preventive treatment could be established.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Fifty healthy female volunteers in the age group of 18 – 25 years who were residing in a women's hostel were

selected for the study by simple random selection method in a period of one month. Day scholars, adult males, females having any ailment such as asthma, diabetes, hypertension or any other obvious medical conditions which could lead to anaemia were excluded from the study. Written informed consent was collected from each of the participants prior to the study. Participation was purely voluntary. Demographic data such as name and age, anthropometric measurements such as height and weight, diet history and frequency of iron rich foods were collected from the selected subjects. Blood sampling was done by finger prick method and haemoglobin levels were estimated using cyanomethaemoglobin method. Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS Version 17.1 and the results have been discussed below. On completion of the study a nutrition education programme was conducted in the ladies hostel focusing on enhancing health and facilitating dietary change among the group.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The characteristic profile of the subjects is presented in Table 1. The mean height and weight of the selected subjects was normal when compared to the ICMR