



CODEN [USA]: IAJPBB

ISSN: 2349-7750

**INDO AMERICAN JOURNAL OF  
PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES**<http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1461037>Available online at: <http://www.iajps.com>

Research Article

**UNHEALTHY EATING PRACTICES IN COLLEGE STUDENTS:  
KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF MEDICAL  
STUDENTS REGARDING NUTRITION**<sup>1</sup>Dr. Sidiqua Javaid, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Muhammad Saad Saeed, <sup>3</sup>Dr. Jamshaid Alam<sup>1</sup>Div. Headquarters Teaching Hospital Mirpur, AJ&K<sup>2</sup>Medical Officer, THQ Sangla Hill<sup>3</sup>Services Hospital Lahore**Abstract:****Objective:** To study the KAP (knowledge, attitude and practice) among medical students of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Medical COLLEGE Mirpur towards nutrition**Introduction:** Unhealthy eating practices in college students: skipping meals (esp. breakfast), high intake of fast food, low intake of fruits and vegetables, minimal intake of water and unhealthy dieting**Methodology:** Type of study: Cross-section.**Sample:** Total 150 students from 1st to 4th years.**Discussion:** In contrast to findings of Wong *et al.*, a positive correlation was not found between nutrition attitude and practice.**Conclusion:** The knowledge & positive attitude of students towards nutrition was above average but still not up to the mark.**Keywords:** KAP, Medical Students Regarding Nutrition.**Corresponding author:****Dr. Sidiqua Javaid,**Div. Headquarters Teaching Hospital,  
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Please cite this article in press Sidiqua Javaid *et al.*, **Unhealthy Eating Practices in College Students: Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Medical Students Regarding Nutrition.**, *Indo Am. J. P. Sci*, 2018; 05(10).

**INTRODUCTION:**

Importance of proper nutrition but unhealthy eating and physical inactivity are still the leading causes of death in the U.S.[1]310,000 to 580,000 deaths/year. Changes in nutrition habits and increased incidence of major diseases (CVS diseases, cancer, osteoporosis, HTN & obesity)[2]. Unhealthy eating practices in college students: skipping meals (esp. breakfast), high intake of fast food, low intake of fruits and vegetables, minimal intake of water and unhealthy dieting [3]. Minimal knowledge about healthy eating behaviors. [4]

**METHODOLOGY:****RESULTS:**

GENDER	AGE	WEIGHT
27.3% male	18-20years 38%	40-50 kgs 35%
72.7% female	21-23 years 83%	51-60kgs 32%
	>23 years 10%	>60kgs 33%

Following data shows meals taken less than three times a day among students

**Type of study:** Cross-section.

**Place:** Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Medical COLLEGE Mirpur Ajk.

**Population:** 400 students of MBBS Medical College Mirpur (A.K)

**Sample:** Total 150 students from 1st to 4th year.

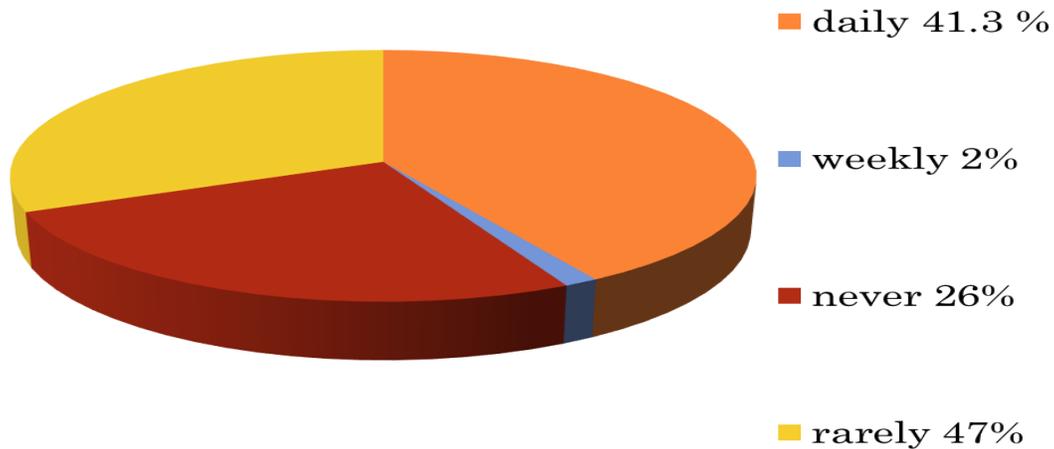
**Technique:** Sample was conveniently selected.

**Tool:** A structured & self-administered and modified questionnaire.

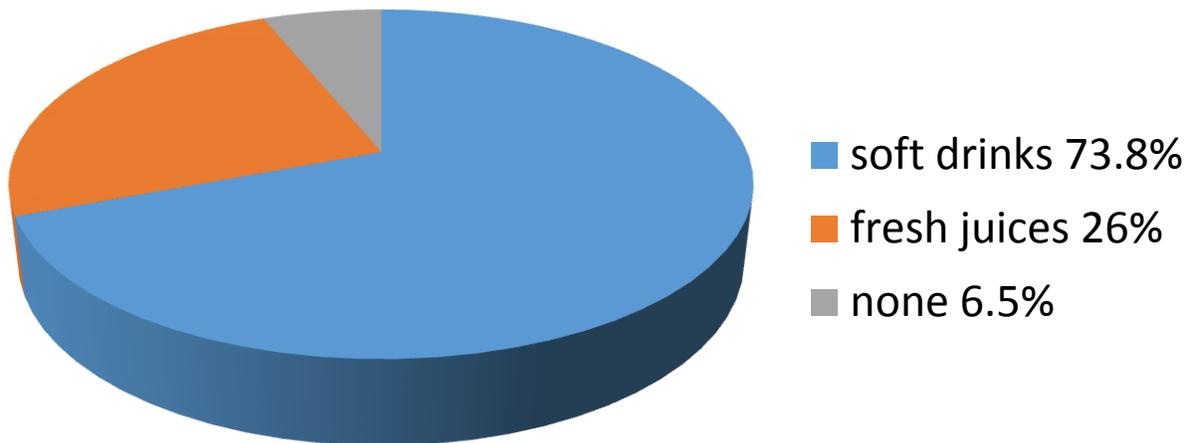
**Analysis:** Software SPSS-version 20<sup>th</sup>.

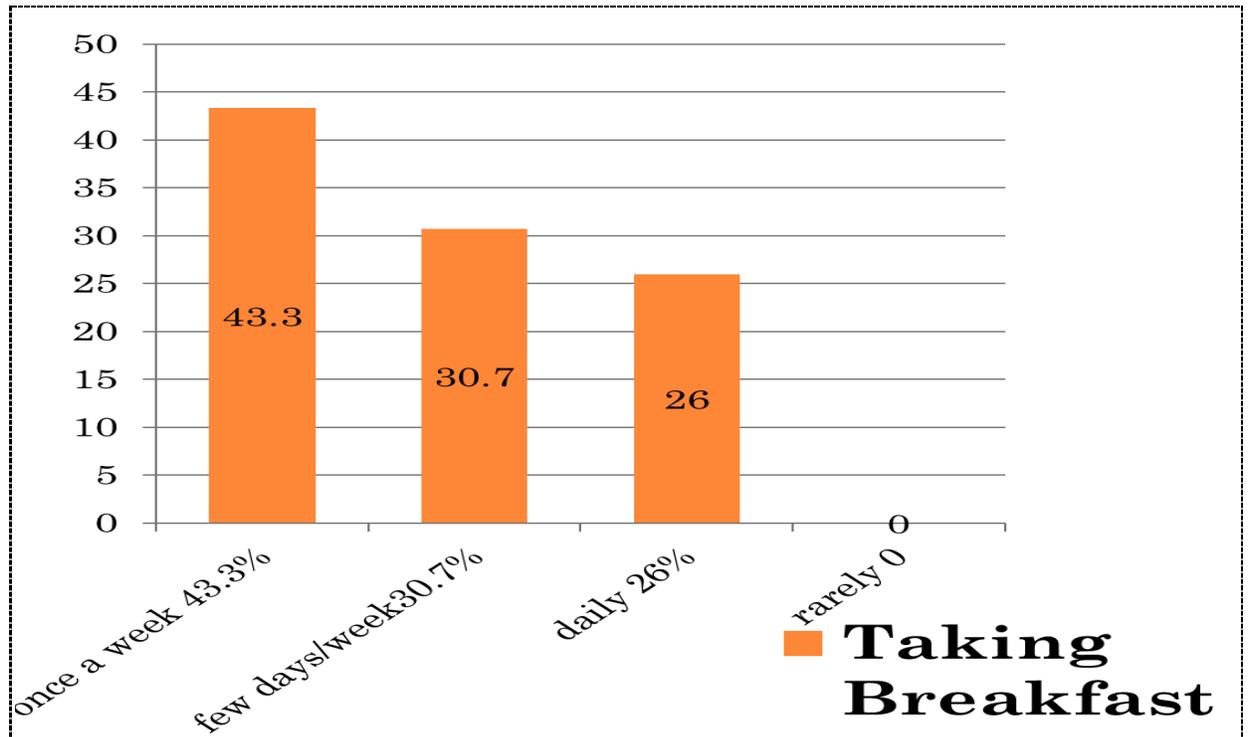
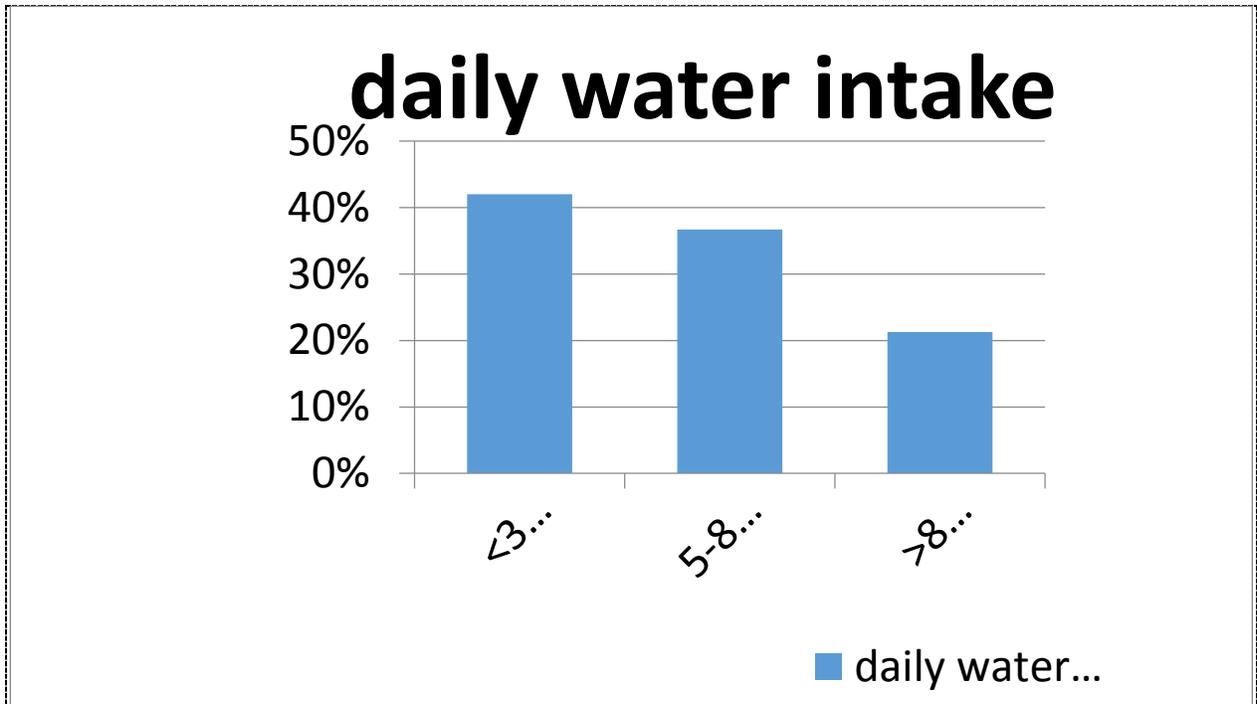
**Statistic:** Frequencies, Percentages, Pie charts, bar graphs by using SPSS 20TH version software.

### Meals taken fewer than 3 times a day

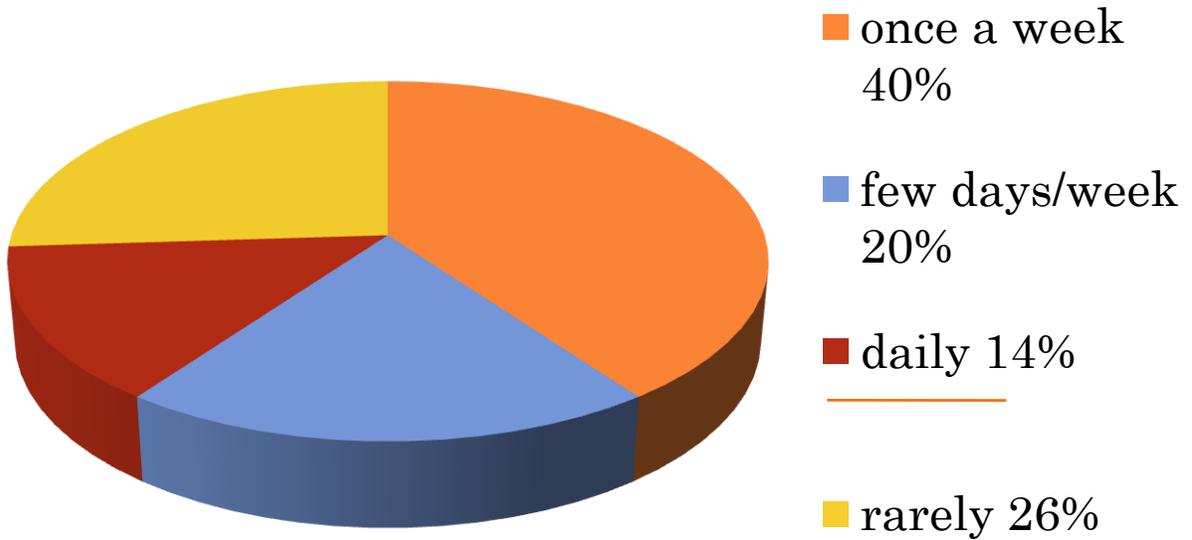


### kind of beverages used

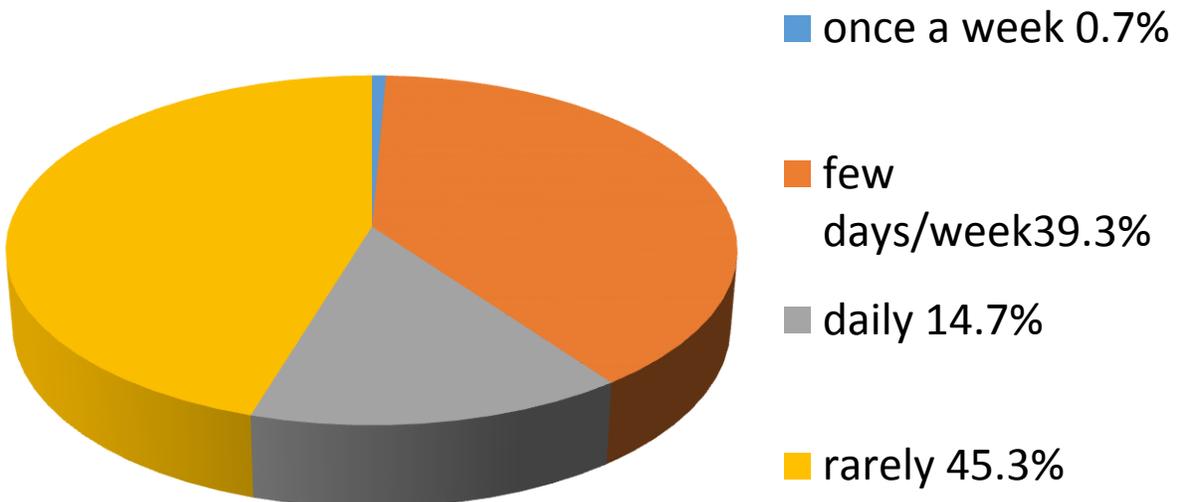




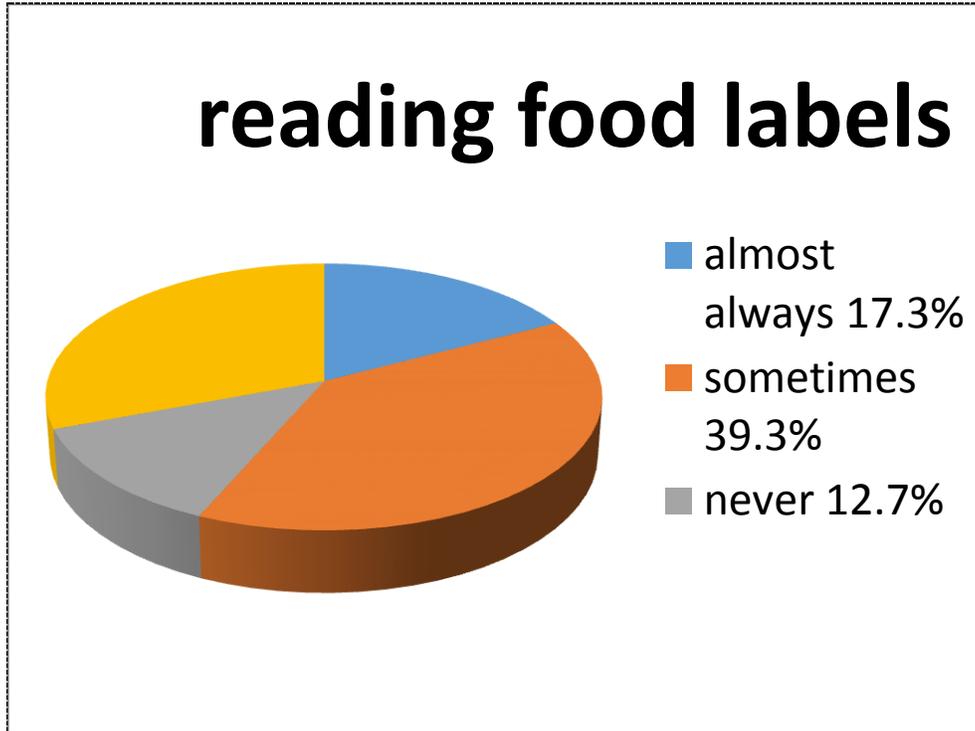
## fast food



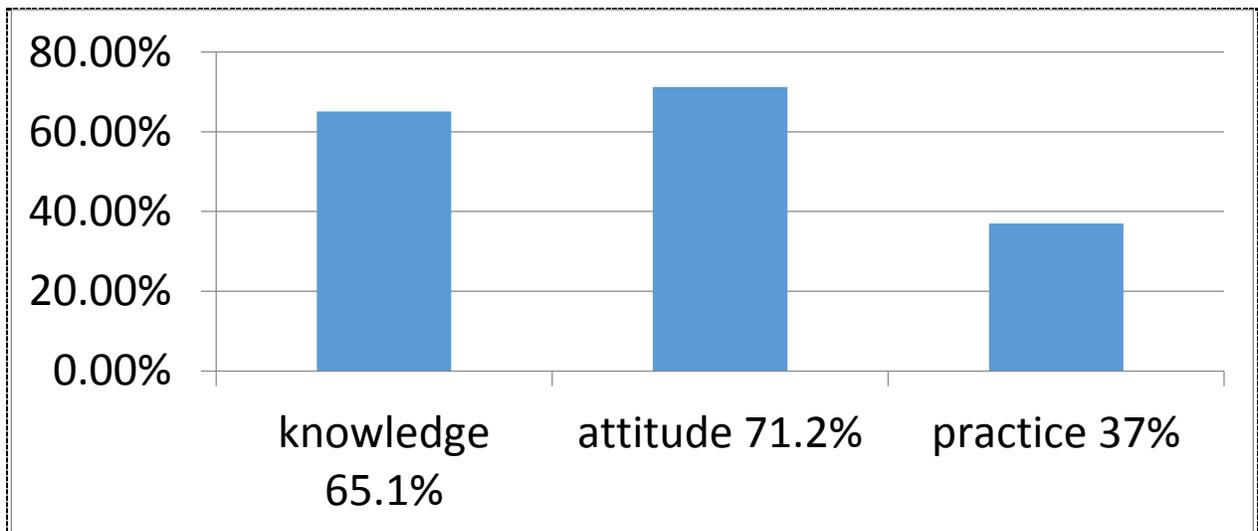
## eating vegetables



Following data show frequency of daily nutrition intake



Data shows knowledge of students about nutrition intake



**DISCUSSION:**

The results of this study as compared with previous studies show that:

In consistent with other studies, Nutrition knowledge is related with field of study. It has improved but it's still inadequate.[5] In contrast to findings of Wong *et al.*, a positive correlation was not found between nutrition attitude and practice.[8] The findings about breakfast skipping are consistent with previous findings, only 26% students take breakfast daily.[6]

The study implied that even though they students had sufficient knowledge regarding healthy food, they found it hard to follow the daily recommendations, similar to a previous study.[10]. 82% of the students reported that they did not eat fresh fruits and vegetables daily.[7]

In the current study it was also found that 80% students do not take fruits and vegetables respectively on daily basis. 87% of the respondents consume Fast food[8] The current study showed that 74% of the students took fast food one or more times/ day.

In general, this research and similar ones demonstrated that male participants had significantly lower consumption of vegetables and fruits and higher intakes of carbohydrates, fats, and meats in comparison to their female counterparts.[9] Both males and females showed acceptable status for meal consumption except for venial individuals who missed main meals in spite of the fact that female participants showed a higher intake of meals, especially between-meal snacks. (10) Calcium intake is an important source of growing strong healthy bones. Not getting proper amounts of calcium in the diet can pose a big health risk for adolescent's athletes students now and in the future. There were encouraging results from this study. (11) Results about fast food consumption revealed that half of the participants ate fast food only once a day and 4.58% of the participants did not eat in the past seven days. These numbers are surprising considering the prevalence of fast food in today's world. Eating fast food only one time in a week is not a poor choice when considering that some fast food choices may actually be healthy. One study indicated that 77.5% of participants ate junk food daily and the majority consumed junk food several times a day. Fruits and vegetables are rich sources of antioxidant that these compounds reduce the risk of major chronic diseases [12]. Regular consumption of fruits and vegetables is associated with reduce risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer, Alzheimer disease and stroke [13]. In this study, more than 60% of households' fruits and vegetables intake was daily

except rural households that 49% of them consumed vegetables every day

Changing households' attitudes, knowledge and awareness about healthy diet leads them to make better food choices. Past studies have shown that poor nutritional knowledge may lead to inappropriate nutritional practice [14]. Nevertheless, there are different issues which lead to the distance between knowledge and practice. So it is essential that these factors should be identified and resolved at the community

**CONCLUSION:**

In the current study it was found that most (63%) of the students practice unhealthy eating habits. The knowledge & positive attitude of students towards nutrition was above average but still not up to the mark. It can be hypothesized that the diet is related to the nutrition attitude and knowledge and subsequently nutrition practices. Then we can come to the conclusion that the promotion of knowledge leads to the promotion of their attitude and subsequently to the improvement of their diet. It seems we need to pay attention to this regard more in order to increase KAP of community and increase of healthy diet among urban and rural community. The present study reveals that there is a paucity of nutrition education intervention among selected students.

Hence, delivering continuous education through workshops and courses helps to improve trainers' nutritional knowledge, attitudes and practices

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Renewed proactive role of the education sector (Community Medicine Dept of Medical College). The community medicine curricula should include the needed information and guidelines for healthy eating habits. Awareness of students towards a balanced diet. Students should pay more attention to nutrition issues.

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