

Understanding Among Academicians Towards Healthy Diet

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ABSTRACT

A healthy diet is fundamental for good wellbeing and nourishment. It safeguards you against numerous persistent noncommunicable sicknesses, like coronary illness, diabetes and disease. Eating different food sources and consuming less salt, sugars and immersed and economically created trans-fats, are fundamental for sound eating regimen. The main objectives of the study to find out knowledge, attitude and practices towards healthy diet among academicians of Gurgaon. The study underscores healthy diet related knowledge, attitude and practice of academicians and found out even if there is knowledge, indifference attitude and the practice of having a healthy diet is meagre. A lot of academicians were overweight. Hence, proper target-oriented interventions were implemented. A booklet was provided having information about healthy diet and its importance and also several healthy recipes were included in it.

This study is expected to provide important information to better understand the importance of healthy diet. Thus, the result of this study will contribute to academician's health by making awareness about the unhealthy or poor dietary practices followed and reduce the risk associated with it.

Keywords : Knowledge, Indifference Attitude

I. INTRODUCTION

A healthy diet is a diet that maintains or improve overall health. A healthy diet provides the body with essential nutrition:

fluid, macronutrients, micronutrients, and adequate food energy. A healthy diet may contain fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and may include little to no processed food or sweetened beverages.

In the current advanced times, the rates of diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular diseases have significantly increased, especially among developing countries. With other risk factors associated with such chronic diseases, bad diet and health habits are some of the main causes. Diet is one of the most important factors which serves as a pivotal indicator of the population's health. The requirements for a healthy diet can be met from a variety of plant-based and animal-based

foods, although a non-plant source of vitamin B12 is needed for those following a vegan diet. Various nutrition guides are published by medical and governmental institutions to educate individuals on what they should be eating to be healthy. Nutrition facts labels are also mandatory in some countries to allow consumers to choose between foods based on the components relevant to health.

Healthy dietary habits are simple and low risk methods to promote and improve well-being and life expectancy. Excessive consumption of saturated fats was shown to be associated with an increase in cholesterol level and risk of cardiovascular disease. Therefore, an increase in consumption of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and seeds and a decrease in the consumption of foods rich in saturated fat, sugar and salt are recommended to maintain a balance between calorie intake and energy expenditure, in order to prevent excessive weight, gain. It seems that the most recent studies were directed towards a more conscious approach to dieting habits, considering organic foods. Dietary habits involve behavioural predisposition in relation to intra- and inter-personal factors, which include nutritional knowledge and attitude towards the consumption of certain types of foods. In this sense, the relationship between dietary behavior, attitude and nutritional knowledge could provide information on the best ways to achieve healthy lifestyle standards.

In the area of education, an increase in the number of health-related injuries relating to characteristics of work requirements has been well documented in faculty of universities. One of these factors is obesity, defined by the accumulation of adipose tissue, caused by several factors, such as sedentary lifestyle, physical inactivity, excessive and unhealthy food intake. University professors usually do not perform their meals correctly, as well as perform physical activities with little regularity which predispose them for overweight and/or obesity.

In this sense, it is necessary to carry out studies that evaluate the health conditions of professors, especially regarding anthropometric indices and eating habits, which can be affected due to the exhaustive work routine. It is hypothesized that academic health professors may present low rate of health-related problems due to high health literacy; however, it has not been well proven.

A healthy diet helps to protect against malnutrition in all its forms, as well as noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), including such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer. Unhealthy diet and lack of physical activity are leading global risks to health. Healthy dietary practices start early in life – breastfeeding fosters healthy growth and improves cognitive development, and may have longer term health benefits such as reducing the risk of becoming overweight or obese and developing NCDs later in life.

Energy intake (calories) should be in balance with energy expenditure. To avoid unhealthy weight gain, total fat should not exceed 30% of total energy intake. Intake of saturated fats should be less than 10% of total energy intake, and intake of trans-fats less than 1% of total energy intake, with a shift in fat consumption away from saturated fats and trans-fats to unsaturated fats, and towards the goal of eliminating industrially-produced trans-fats. Limiting intake of free sugars to less than 10% of total energy intake is part of a healthy diet. A further reduction to less than 5% of total energy intake is suggested for additional health benefits. Keeping salt intake to less than 5 g per day (equivalent to sodium intake of less than 2 g per day) helps to prevent hypertension, and reduces the risk of heart disease and stroke in the adult population. WHO Member States have agreed to reduce the global population's intake of salt by 30% by 2025; they have also agreed to halt the rise in diabetes and obesity in adults and adolescents as well as in childhood overweight by 2025.

Practical advice on maintaining a healthy diet

1) Fruit and vegetables

Eating at least 400 g, or five portions, of fruit and vegetables per day reduces the risk of NCDs and helps to ensure an adequate daily intake of dietary fibre.

Fruit and vegetable intake can be improved by:

- always including vegetables in meals;
- eating fresh fruit and raw vegetables as snacks;
- eating fresh fruit and vegetables that are in season; and
- eating a variety of fruit and vegetables.

2) Fats

Reducing the amount of total fat intake to less than 30% of total energy intake helps to prevent unhealthy weight gain in the adult population. Also, the risk of developing NCDs is lowered by:

- reducing saturated fats to less than 10% of total energy intake;
- reducing trans-fats to less than 1% of total energy intake; and
- replacing both saturated fats and trans-fats with unsaturated fats – in particular, with polyunsaturated fats.

Fat intake, especially saturated fat and industrially-produced trans-fat intake, can be reduced by:

- steaming or boiling instead of frying when cooking;
- replacing butter, lard and ghee with oils rich in polyunsaturated fats, such as soybean, canola (rapeseed), corn, safflower and sunflower oils;
- eating reduced-fat dairy foods and lean meats, or trimming visible fat from meat; and
- limiting the consumption of baked and fried foods, and pre-packaged snacks and foods (e.g. doughnuts, cakes, pies, cookies, biscuits and

wafers) that contain industrially-produced trans-fats.

3) Salt, sodium and potassium

Most people consume too much sodium through salt (corresponding to consuming an average of 9–12 g of salt per day) and not enough potassium (less than 3.5 g). High sodium intake and insufficient potassium intake contribute to high blood pressure, which in turn increases the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Reducing salt intake to the recommended level of less than 5 g per day could prevent 1.7 million deaths each year.

People are often unaware of the amount of salt they consume. In many countries, most salt comes from processed foods (e.g. ready meals; processed meats such as bacon, ham and salami; cheese; and salty snacks) or from foods consumed frequently in large amounts (e.g. bread). Salt is also added to foods during cooking (e.g. bouillon, stock cubes, soy sauce and fish sauce) or at the point of consumption (e.g. table salt).

Salt intake can be reduced by:

- limiting the amount of salt and high-sodium condiments (e.g. soy sauce, fish sauce and bouillon) when cooking and preparing foods;
- not having salt or high-sodium sauces on the table;
- limiting the consumption of salty snacks; and
- choosing products with lower sodium content.

Some food manufacturers are reformulating recipes to reduce the sodium content of their products, and people should be encouraged to check nutrition labels to see how much sodium is in a product before purchasing or consuming it.

Potassium can mitigate the negative effects of elevated sodium consumption on blood pressure.

Intake of potassium can be increased by consuming fresh fruit and vegetables

4) Sugars

In both adults and children, the intake of free sugars should be reduced to less than 10% of total energy intake. A reduction to less than 5% of total energy intake would provide additional health benefits.

Consuming free sugars increases the risk of dental caries (tooth decay). Excess calories from foods and drinks high in free sugars also contribute to unhealthy weight gain, which can lead to overweight and obesity. Recent evidence also shows that free sugars influence blood pressure and serum lipids, and suggests that a reduction in free sugars intake reduces risk factors for cardiovascular diseases.

Sugars intake can be reduced by:

- limiting the consumption of foods and drinks containing high amounts of sugars, such as sugary snacks, candies and sugar-sweetened beverages (i.e. all types of beverages containing free sugars – these include carbonated or non-carbonated soft drinks, fruit or vegetable juices and drinks, liquid and powder concentrates, flavoured water, energy and sports drinks, ready-to-drink tea, ready-to-drink coffee and flavoured milk drinks); and
- eating fresh fruit and raw vegetables as snacks instead of sugary snacks.

A healthy diet helps people maintain and improve their general health. It is important to intake the right nutrients daily to obtain a healthy diet. Nutrients can be obtained in many foods and thousands of diet plans. It is important that people watch their intake of diet plans. It is important that people watch their intake of food to maintain a healthy diet. Having an unhealthy diet can be a major risk factor for a number of chronic diseases including diabetes, high blood pressure,

obesity. It's very important to know how to lower high blood pressure because it's a condition that increases the risk for heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, and other health problems. The choices we make in our lifestyle can go a long way towards preventing high blood pressure. People, who don't already have high blood pressure, should become familiar with healthy habits to reduce their risk of ever getting it. People, who already have high blood pressure, should immediately start healthy habits to lower their blood pressure and decrease their risk of developing major complications. Managing stress is important because stress can take a major toll anyone and it can play a key role in high blood pressure.

A Balanced Diet is a Healthy Diet:

To function our body properly needs all nutrients derived from food, protein, carbohydrates (sugar) and fat, as well as vitamins and minerals. Balance is the key to maintaining a healthy weight and has the best chance of staying healthy.

Proper nutrition emphasizes a diet that contains all the vitamins, minerals, nutrients, and calories that the body needs to function correctly. A healthy diet usually includes lots of fruits and vegetables, lean protein, little (but not) fat, and healthy oils and seeds. Proper nutrition will not have a blacklist of all food products, but focuses on portion size and minimizes consumption of fewer foods or processed foods.

A proper diet makes weight loss truly possible and promotes the types of safe, gradual, and sustainable weight loss that doctors recommend. Adequate nutrition is also essential to overcome health problems, to maintain a strong immune system, and increase good energy levels and a sense of well-being.

Pleasure and variety are essential for a balanced diet. Fatty and sweet foods are usually the most delicious and can be part of a balanced diet if consumed in moderation. A balanced diet should meet the needs of our bodies, no more, no less.

A healthy, balanced diet will usually include the following nutrients:

- vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants
- carbohydrates, including starches and fiber
- protein
- healthy fats

A balanced diet will include a variety of foods from the following groups:

- fruits
- vegetables
- grains
- dairy
- protein foods

A balanced diet includes some specific healthy food groups under it:

- Vegetables such as leafy greens, starchy vegetables, legumes like beans and peas, red and orange vegetables, and others like eggplant
- Fruits that include whole fruits, fresh or frozen fruits but not canned ones dipped in syrup
- Grains such as whole grains and refined grains. For example, quinoa, oats, brown rice, barley, and buckwheat
- Protein such as lean beef and pork, chicken, fish, beans, peas, and legumes
- Dairy products such as low-fat milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, and soy milk

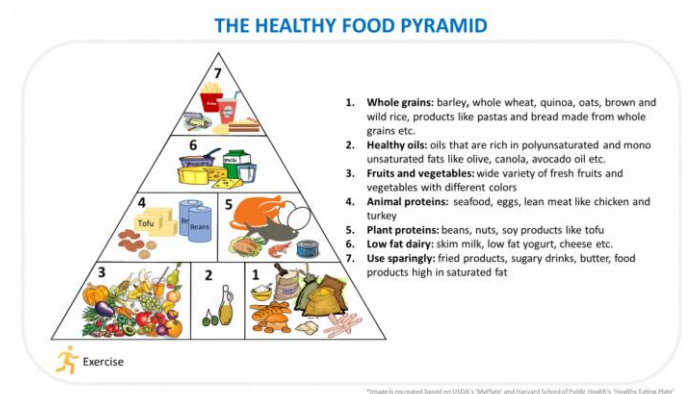
In order to eat a healthy and balanced diet, there are two guides given:

FOOD PYRAMID & MY PLATE

FOOD PYRAMID

The food pyramid is a triangle divided into sections which represents different food groups. We need to

incorporate food in right amounts from each sections daily into our diet in order to have a healthy and balanced diet. See the following image for the food pyramid and how its sections represent different food groups. The sections are marked using numbers.

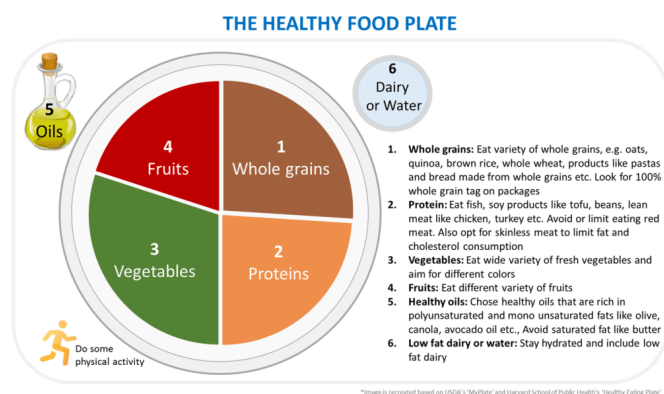


Consumers can think of the Healthy Eating Pyramid as a grocery list:

- Vegetables, fruits, whole grains, healthy oils, and healthy proteins like nuts, beans, fish, and chicken should make it into the shopping cart every week, along with a little yogurt or other dairy foods if desired.
- The Healthy Eating Pyramid also addresses other aspects of a healthy lifestyle—exercise, weight control, vitamin D, and multivitamin supplements, and moderation in alcohol for people who drink—so it's a useful tool for health professionals and health educators.
- The Healthy Eating Plate and the companion Healthy Eating Pyramid summarize the best dietary information available today. They aren't set in stone, though, because nutrition researchers will undoubtedly turn up new information in the years ahead. The Healthy Eating Pyramid and the Healthy Eating Plate will change to reflect important new evidence.

MY PLATE

MyPlate is the current nutrition guide published by the USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, a graphic depicting a place setting with a plate and glass divided into five food groups.



Make most of your meal vegetables and fruits – ½ of your plate. Aim for color and variety, and remember that potatoes don't count as vegetables on the Health Eating Plate because of their negative impact on blood sugar.

Go for whole grains – ¼ of your plate. Whole intact grains—whole wheat, barley, wheat berries, quinoa, oats, brown rice, and foods made with them, such as whole wheat pasta—have a milder effect on blood sugar and insulin than white bread, white rice, and other refined grains.

Protein power – ¼ of your plate. Fish, poultry, beans, and nuts are all healthy, versatile protein sources—they can be mixed into salads, and pair well with vegetables on a plate. Limit red meat, and avoid processed meats such as bacon and sausage.

Healthy plant oils – in moderation. Choose healthy vegetable oils like olive, canola, soy, corn, sunflower, peanut, and others, and avoid partially hydrogenated oils, which contain unhealthy trans fats. Remember that low-fat does not mean “healthy.”

Drink water, coffee, or tea. Skip sugary drinks, limit milk and dairy products to one to two servings per day, and limit juice to a small glass per day.

Stay active. The red figure running across the Healthy Eating Plate's placemat is a reminder that staying active is also important in weight control.

BENEFITS OF HEALTHY DIET

The following are seven benefits of a healthy diet in order to help you obtain and sustain motivation:

Increases longevity – When you practice healthy eating habits, in combination with exercise, you can improve your lifespan.

Boosts productivity – When we consume a great amount of unhealthy food, we often feel lethargic and tired. However, when you eat a balanced diet consisting of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean meats and low-fat dairy products, your body is providing with the essential nutrients to increase or maintain your level of energy.

Fights diseases – A healthy diet can help prevent or manage a wide array of health conditions including diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, depression and certain types of cancer.

Saves money on life insurance – Depending on your health, you may have to pay double the life insurance cost in premiums or be denied for coverage entirely if you're considered obese. By adopting a healthier lifestyle, you could drastically lower your costs when you apply.

Controls weight – By eating a balanced, calorie-managed diet, you will be able to maintain a healthy weight.

Enhances mood – Maintaining a stable blood sugar level through adequate nutrition will help you feel better, since what you eat has an impact on the part of

your brain that regulates mood. A healthy diet can also reduce stress as well.

- **Reduces wrinkles** – Vegetables and fruits are food with high water content, helping moisturize the skin and maintain hydration. They also contain antioxidants to protect your body against damage to the cells, resulting in younger-looking skin.

Eating a healthy diet is all about feeling great, having more energy, improving your health, and boosting your mood. Good nutrition, physical activity, and healthy body weight are essential parts of a person's overall health and well-being. There's no questioning the importance of healthy food in your life. Unless you maintain a proper diet for a healthy body, you may be prone to diseases, infection, or even exhaustion. The importance of nutritious food for children especially needs to be highlighted since otherwise they may end up being prone to several growth and developmental problems. Some of the most common health problems that arise from lack of a balanced diet are heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes. Being physically active manages many health problems and improves mental health by reducing stress, depression, and pain. Regular exercise helps to prevent metabolic syndrome, stroke, high blood pressure, arthritis, and anxiety.

It's not just a balanced diet that's enough but also healthy practices of eating. Some of them which you can follow are:

- Eat in smaller portions – You can do this by eating in small bowls to trick your brain into thinking it to be larger portions.
- Take time to eat – Not rushing your meals in between other work but taking the time to nourish your meals can send signals to your brain that you've had enough food necessary for functioning.

Cut down on snacks – Unhealthy snacks are a strict no as they hamper your hunger. Switching to healthy bite-sized food can help.

Curb emotional eating – Binge eating can be extremely harmful. Using it to relieve yourself from stress, sadness, or anxiety may affect your health. Instead, you can use healthier alternatives to beat negative emotions.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess the **knowledge** of academicians regarding the healthy diet.
- To perceive the **attitude** of participants towards healthy diet.
- To investigate their **practices** towards consumption of healthy diet.
- To **intervene** them regarding the healthy diet and its significance

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present entitled "Knowledge, attitude and practices regarding healthy diet among academicians" was a purposive random study carried out in Gurgaon during the period of October 2021 to November 2021.

Permission was obtained from the authority of the selected university. The questionnaire was in English and assistance was provided to the academicians where needed. Before starting of the study, pre testing of the questionnaire was done and accordingly necessary modifications were made and finalized. The data was collected for 5 days. Each of the academicians was explained the purpose of the study. Good rapport was built with them. Briefing was done regarding the questionnaire that was provided to the students.

LOCALE OF THE STUDY

The present study was carried out in Gurgaon. The academicians in the university were selected randomly and were selected for study for the following reasons:

- Willingness to co – operate
- Ease of accessibility by the investigator
- Availability of the target group

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

- Sample: Academicians (25 – 40 years)
- Sample size: 120 academicians
- Sampling technique: purposive random sampling technique was used to select the sample.

Criteria for selection

- Academicians teaching in the university should be there.
- Only 25 – 40 years of academicians were taken
- Both males and females selected.

TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

1. **Questionnaire:** Each academician was interviewed using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of:
 - **Demographic information:** Name, age, gender, height, weight, BMI, educational qualifications, family type, marital status, vegetarian or non – vegetarian.
 - **Section A:** This includes knowledge questions. There were total 15 questions in this section.
 - **Section B:** This includes questions related to attitude of academicians towards healthy diet. There were total 10 questions in this section.
 - **Section C:** This includes practice questions. A 24 hr dietary recall questionnaire was given to each academician to be filled.
2. **Pretesting:** The questionnaire was finalised after performing a pretest on 15% of the total sample that were not included in the sample. On the basis of information collected, necessary modifications were incorporated for the clarity of the required information.

SCORING

Knowledge

The score was divided into three categories: poor knowledge with a score less than 50%, moderate knowledge with a score of 50% to 75%, and good knowledge more than 75%.

Attitude

The score was divided into three categories: negative with a score less than 50%, indifference from 50% to 75% and positive more than 75%.

DATA COLLECTION

Firstly, rapport establishment was done with the sample. The data was collected in the month of October and November, 2021. The questionnaires were handed over to selected academicians and the purpose of the study was explained to them. The anonymity of the respondent was taken care. On an average time taken for the completion of the questionnaire by the respondent was 10 – 15 minutes. Information was derived as per the convenience of the respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS

In accordance with the kind of information and data collected, data was subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis. Categories of analysis were formulated, the responses were coded and tabulated with respect to analytical category. They were analysed according to the objectives of the present study.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- **ASSESS:** Assess refers to statistical measurement on knowledge and practice regarding healthy diet among academicians by using self – administered questionnaire.
- **KNOWLEDGE:** In the present study Knowledge refers to the level of understanding of academicians on healthy diet. Knowledge - what people know and their understanding.

- **ATTITUDE:** In the present study attitude refers to way of thinking or point of view of academicians on healthy diet. Attitude - how they feel, their preconceived ideas towards this subject.
- **PRACTICE:** In the present study practice refers to the dietary practices followed by the academicians. Practice - how they behave, how they demonstrate their knowledge and attitude through their actions.
- **ACADEMICIANS:** Professors or teachers who are 25 – 40 years old teaching in the selected university.

HYPOTHESIS

- H1 – Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of academicians of the selected university would be poor.
- H2 - Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of academicians of the selected university would be appropriate.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The sociodemographic information reported and discussed in this chapter include: gender, age, educational qualifications, marital status, BMI, family type, health status. These variables were purposely selected based on the information the academicians were able to provide accurately.

Participant Characteristic	Respondents	
	n	%
Married/had been married	96	80
BMI		
Underweight (< 18.5)	4	3.33
Normal (18.5 – 24.9)	72	60
Overweight (25 – 29.9)	44	36.7
Are you		
Vegetarian	68	56.7
Non – vegetarian	40	33.3
Eggetarian	12	10
Family type		
Joint family	56	46.7
Nuclear family	64	53.3
Health Status		
Healthy	92	76.6
Unhealthy	28	23.3

Table 1. Socio-demographic and health characteristics of the study participants.

It is evident from table 1 that the number of academicians who responded to the survey positively were 120, the mean age was 33.2 ± 4.54 ; 84 (70%) were males, while 36 (30%) were females. The majority of the participants were aged between 30 – 40 years (76.6%) and married 96 (80%), only a few were not married 24 (20%). Most of the participants were vegetarian 68 (56.7%) whereas non – vegetarians were 40 (33.3%) and only 12 (10%) were eggetarian. 64 (53.3%) participants are living in a nuclear family and 56 (46.7%) are living in joint family. Furthermore, the mean of body mass index (BMI) that the participants showed is 23.9 ± 2.7 . the study found that about 44 (36.7%) of subjects were overweight and showed low nutritional status, 72 (60%) were normal and 4 (3.33%) were underweight also indicating low nutritional status. Majority of the participants 92 (76.6%) considered their health status healthy and only a few of the participants 28 (23.3%) considered their health status unhealthy.

V. CONCLUSION

Participant Characteristic	Respondents	
	n	%
Gender		
Male	36	30
Female	84	70
Age (years)		
25 – 30	28	23.3
31 - 40	92	76.6
Educational Qualifications		
Ph. D	60	50
Post - graduate	60	50
Marital status		
Not married	24	20

According to World Health Organisation, health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. A healthy diet helps to protect against malnutrition in all its forms, as well as non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer. Unhealthy diet and lack of physical activity are leading global risks to health.

The main objectives of the study to find out knowledge, attitude and practices towards healthy diet among academicians of Gurgaon. The study underscores healthy diet related knowledge, attitude and practice of academicians and found out even if there is knowledge, indifference attitude and the practice of having a healthy diet is meagre. A lot of academicians were overweight. Hence, proper target-oriented interventions were implemented. A booklet was provided having information about healthy diet and its importance and also several healthy recipes were included in it.

This study is expected to provide important information to better understand the importance of healthy diet. Thus, the result of this study will contribute to academician's health by making awareness about the unhealthy or poor dietary practices followed and reduce the risk associated with it.

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