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A study to assess the associations between parental feeding styles and childhood eating habits: A survey of preschool children (3-5yrs of age) at north Karnataka

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Abstract

Childhood obesity is a global public health issue, including in the Indian setting, and its prevalence has increased dramatically throughout the last decade. Since the origins of childhood obesity may lie in the preschool period, factors relating to very young children's food consumption should be investigated. Parental influence, including feeding style, is the major determinant of childhood dietary behavior through altering food provision and social environment.

Keywords: PS (Preschool children), ED (Energy density foods), IF (Instrumental feeding)

Introduction

Food plays a vital role in the growth of a nation. Nutrient requirements and suggested dietary intakes of nutrients currently recommended by national and international organizations are primarily intended for healthy normal growth and development of preschool children's (3-5 years of age) [1]. In India and in other developing countries, it was found that 80% of its population subsisted on recommended dietary allowance (RDA). Assessment of dietary inadequacy among preschool children revealed that the extent of caloric inadequacy ranged from 10-50% or more in the rural and urban slums of the country. Globally, under the age of 5 years 30% children are stunted and 18% are suffering with low birth weight and height and 43% children are overweight (UNICEF 2012) [2]. Overweight and obesity among preschool children's is an emerging problem. The magnitude of overweight ranges from 9% to 27.5% and obesity ranges from 1% to 12.9% among Indian children [3]. With respect to parenting styles, an authoritarian style of feeding, in which eating demands placed on children are high and responsiveness to children's needs are low,

promote over eating, overweight, food rejection and picky eating. In contrast authoritative style of feeding, characterized by placing high demands on eating behavior while also being highly responsive [4]. Preschool age children (3-5 years) are still developing their eating habits and need encouragement to eat healthy meals and snacks. These children are eager to learn they need imitate eating behaviors of adults. They need supervision at meal time as they are still working on chewing and swallowing skills. The USDA, U S department of health and human services has prepared food plates to help parents select food for children age 2 and older. It consists of foods as grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy and proteins [5].

Material and methods

The study involves purposive sampling technique and the design was non experimental group design. The subjects of this study were Pre-school children of age group (3-5 years). The study was conducted in selected kindergarten of belagavi during the period of January 2020 - March 2020. 500 samples were selected for the study.

Table 1: Socio demographic variables, N=500

Age group (years)	Respondents	
	N	%
3-4yrs	130	26.2
4-5yrs	168	33.5
5yrs	202	40.3
Gender		
Male	300	83.3
Female	200	16.7
School status		
Whole day	150	30.1
Full day	350	69.0
Belagavi city	264	52.7
Gokak	215	43.1
Bailonghal	6	1.1
Khanapur	15	3.1
Number of siblings		
0	102	20.4
1	210	41.9
2	188	37.8
Relationship to the child		
Father	254	50.8
Mother	246	49.2
Others	0	0

Results

Where, N=Number of samples, % = Percentage of samples. Describes that In the present study 300 (83.3%) were male and about 200 (16.7%) participants were female, only a very few children were attending nursery (3-4yrs) 26.2%, where the distribution was more for 4-5yrs (33.5%) and 5-6yrs (40.3%). Over half of the children (69.9%) attended half day school, while most (52.7%) were born in Belgaum city and about (41.9%) children had one sibling and (20.4%) were only children. Most of the questionnaires (50.8%) were filled in by children fathers.

Table 2: Association between parental feeding practice and the average consumption of high-ED food

Parental feeding style	Average scores (SD)	95% CI
Instrumental feeding	1.70	0.45
Emotional feeding	1.49	0.50
Prompting and encouragement to eat	1.31	0.46
Control over eating	1.58	0.49

States that parent were more likely to exercise instrumental feeding style 1.70 (0.45%) and control over eating feeding style 1.58 (0.49%) that promotes consumption of high ED foods such as fruits, vegetables and dairy products. Whereas, Prompting and encouragement to eat had the lowest tendency to be implemented 1.31% (0.46%) along with emotional feeding style 1.49 (0.50%).

Table 3: Number and percentage of children fulfilling recommended dietary intake and meal practice

Food consumption or meal practice	Number	(Percentage%)
Fruits (1 Servings or more)	Yes	419 81.6
	No	81 18.4
Vegetables (2 Servings or more)	Yes	467 90.7
	No	33 9.3
Dairy products (2 Servings or more)	Yes	479 93
	No	36 7
Breakfast	Yes	476 7.6

	No	39	92.4
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The proportions of children conforming to their recommended dietary intake and meal practices are described as 81.6%, 90.7%, 93% of pre-school children consumed the suggested intakes of fruits, vegetables and dairy products, only 7.6% children did not skip breakfast in the 7days prior to the survey.

Discussion

Description of socio demographic data and results

In the present study 300 (83.3%) were male and about 200 (16.7%) participants were female, only a very few children were attending nursery (3-4yrs) 26.2%, where the distribution was more for 4-5yrs (33.5%) and 5-6yrs (40.3%). Over half of the children (69.9%) attended half day school, while most (52.7%) were born in Belgaum city and about (41.9%) children had one sibling and (20.4%) were only children. For parents, the majority of fathers were part time employees (33.7%) while nearly half of mothers were unemployed (38.7%) most fathers (36.5%) received secondary education and mothers (50.10%) received primary education. The monthly incomes of maximum participating families were between 11.000-20.000 (39.1%), most of the questionnaires (50.8%) were filled in by children fathers.

A study conducted on associations between parental feeding styles and childhood eating habits: A survey of Hong Kong pre-school children by Kenneth Lo and Calvin Cheung showed that. Majority 2360 (51.8%) of the subjects were male and 2175 (47.8%) were female. Only a very few children were attending nursery 3-4yrs 1572 (35.5%). Maximum number of children attended half day school 2400 (52.7%), while majority 4270 (93.8%) of children were born in Hong Kong; 2069 (45.4%) children had one sibling and 1700 (37.3%) had only one children. For parents, the majority of parents were full-time employees 3823 (84.0%), while most of the mothers were unemployed 2223 (48.8%). Majority of fathers were full time employees

3823 (84.0%). Most of the fathers 3092 (67.9%) and mothers 3272 (71.9%) received secondary education. Monthly incomes of over half 701 (18.6%) of the families were below HK\$20,000. Most of the questionnaires 3748 (82.3%) were filled in by the mothers.

Section B: Description of Results

States that parent were more likely to exercise instrumental feeding style 1.70 (0.45%) and control over eating feeding style 1.58 (0.49%) that promotes consumption of high ED foods. Whereas, Prompting and encouragement to eat had the lowest tendency to be implemented 1.31% (0.46%) along with emotional feeding style 1.49 (0.50%).

A study conducted on associations between parental feeding styles and childhood eating habits: A survey of Hong Kong pre-school children by Kenneth Lo and Calvin Cheung resulted, that instrumental and emotional feeding promotes consumption of high ED foods. Control and encouragement on food intake have the opposite impact.

Conclusion

After analyzing the association between parental feeding styles and childhood eating habits of pre -school children, it was found that instrumental feeding and control over eating feeding style promotes the consumption of high ED foods, Whereas, Prompting and encouragement to eat had the lowest tendency to be implemented along with emotional feeding style.

Conflict of Interest: Not available

Financial Support: Not available

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