

Abstract

OBJECTIVE: The objective of this study was to identify the factors that influence the consumption of fruit and vegetable among students at the St Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies.

METHOD: A sample of 100 undergraduate, full time students attending the St Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies was studied. A structured, self administered questionnaire was used to conduct the study. The survey was conducted in April 2011. The survey instrument evaluated daily fruit and vegetable intake among 50 male and 50 female respondents. The questionnaire included sections based on respondent's characteristics, nutrition and health knowledge and lifestyle. Descriptive analysis was used to assess the data.

RESULTS: The mean daily intake of FV for females is 4.29 ± 3.5 and for males 3.13 ± 2.64 . Female students had a significantly higher (Sig = 0.05) daily fruit and vegetable intake compared to male students. Only 26% of the students consume five or more fruit and vegetable servings per day; 15% representing females and 11% representing males. The prevalence of overweight and obesity is higher in males than females. Respondents with positive health behaviours and high fruit and vegetable knowledge consumed adequate servings of fruit and vegetables daily.

CONCLUSION: Inadequate intake of fruit and vegetables exists among students. Consumption of fruit and vegetables is lower in male students than female students. Factors such as high physical activity and high fruit and vegetable knowledge positively affect fruit and vegetable intake. Inadequate accessibility and availability of fruits and vegetable lowers the consumption of fruit and vegetables among the students.