

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION OF UWI STUDENTS IN TRINIDAD AND THEIR VIEWS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FARMERS' MARKET AT THE ST.AUGUSTINE CAMPUS.

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Background: Fruit and vegetable consumption can decrease overweight and obesity, which are leading factors for several chronic diseases. The establishment of a farmers' market can be used as a way to increase fruit and vegetable intake.

Objective: To determine: **(1)** University students' fruit and vegetable consumption patterns and factors contributing to intended use of campus farmers' market.

Design: A cross-sectional survey was used to assess the fruit and vegetable consumption patterns of UWI students and investigate student interest in establishing a farmers' market on campus. Data was collected via a questionnaire survey and included questions about social and demographic information, fruit and vegetable intake and interest in establishing a market on campus. The surveys were randomly distributed to 185 students. The data was analyzed using Chi-square tests and cross-tabulations. All the analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 for Windows. A p-test was used to test the probability that students will utilize a farmers' market on campus. Gender, student status, residence, consumption of fruits and vegetables, persons who personally bought fruits and vegetables and lower prices was analyzed against preference for a farmers' market using Chi-square test.

Results: The study identified that 17.5% of the population consumed fruit and vegetables at least once daily. Females consumed more fruits and vegetables than males. In addition, students who bought fruits and vegetables personally had higher fruit and vegetable intake. Of the 185 students surveyed, 90% reported interest in the establishment of a farmers' market on campus with an even greater interest, 93% in the use of a farmers' market once established. Once established, females were more likely to use the farmers' market when compared to males.

Conclusion: This study reveals the urgent need for fruit and vegetable promotion among university students at this critical stage of development. A campus farmers' market was readily accepted as a possible environmental strategy for fruit and vegetable promotion among this target population. Further research into the health-related benefits of campus farmers' markets is needed.

