

BASIC NUTRITION KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOUR AMONG STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES, ST AUGUSTINE CAMPUS

Nyosha hazel

Project Supervisor: Dr.Patricia Dyett

2012

Background: Nutrition is the sum of the total processes involved in the intake and utilization of food substances by living organisms, including ingestion, digestion, absorption, transport and metabolism of nutrients in food (Melvin, 2005). Sufficient nutrition during early childhood is essential for the development of each child's potential.

Objective: Research indicates that the nutritional knowledge among university students is minimal and vary based on the area/major of study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of nutrition knowledge of students at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus.

Design: A self-administered questionnaire incorporating questions of demographic information, meal background information and basic nutrition knowledge questions was distributed to the target population and consisted of 230 undergraduate students with males (n=66) and females (n=164).The data collected was analyzed by descriptive statistics, one way ANOVA and two tailed Pearson correlation coefficient ($p \leq 0.05$).

Results: The results show that both male and female had average nutrition knowledge. Also nutrition knowledge correct response score was higher in female than male students. The ANOVA shows that there was a significant difference among majors, where nutrition major students demonstrated higher knowledge than non nutrition major students. Results showed

significant correlations between levels of knowledge preparation of nutritious breakfast and lunch ($r = 0.736$; $p \leq 0.001$), dinner ($r = 0.797$; $p \leq 0.001$) and significant correlations between knowledge of preparation of nutritious lunch and dinner ($r = 0.807$; $p \leq 0.001$) .

Conclusion: The university arena represents the final opportunity for learning on a large scale. Therefore, nutrition education and strategies to achieve desirable diet behaviours is needed.