

**TO IDENTIFY THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CONSUMPTION OF FRUIT AND  
VEGETABLES AMONG STUDENTS AT THE ST. AUGUSTINE CAMPUS OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF THE  
WEST INDIES**

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**Background:** Fruits and Vegetables (FV) are important components that make up the six Caribbean food groups. These low energy foods are a source of FV are an important source of various vitamins and minerals such as, vitamin C, folate, potassium, and  $\beta$  carotene. Furthermore, FV make a significant contribution to total dietary fibre and are also a great source of phytochemicals, which may also play a role in the prevention of chronic diseases that help sustain a healthy living. The term fruit refers to an edible part of a plant that is made up of seeds and surrounding tissue. Fruits are classified as fleshy fruits (such as pumpkin and tomato) and dry fruits where the ripening ovary wall has lost most of its water content such as cereals, grains, pulses (mature beans and peas) and nuts

**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.

**Design:** 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  $4.29 \pm 3.5$  and for males  $3.13 \pm 2.64$ . 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