

## **FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH POOR EATING HABITS IN FEMALES 11-16 YEARS.**

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**Background:** There are several factors that have been associated with poor eating habits .Adolescence is a unique intervention point in the life cycle. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescents as persons aged 10-19 years old.

**Objective:** This research focuses on aspects that may be associated with poor eating habits of high school female teenagers, which may predispose this group to nutrition and weight related diseases.

**Design:** A cross-sectional study was designed and conducted using anthropometric tools, socio demographic questionnaire and a food frequency sheet to collect data from a group of 116 participants.

**Results:** Body Mass Index (BMI) was inversely associated with frequency of lunch consumption at home ( $r = 0.37$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ). In addition, the food frequency data indicated that the most frequently consumed food was carbohydrate based foods (32%) followed by snacks (23%) and the least consumed foods were fatty foods (2%), followed by dairy (5%), legumes (5%) and vegetables (5%).

**Conclusion:** Female adolescents who eat lunch at home are more likely to be within a healthy BMI than those who reported not having lunch at home. Carbohydrate based foods and snacks are more frequently consumed as compared with other foods.

