

General lifestyle characteristics of students who practice sports

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Abstract:

The article deals with the problems of a healthy, balanced eating habits for students who regularly attend classes of physical education (PE). The general features of the daily diet are analyzed. The experiment involved 1,620 students of Lesya Ukrainka Eastern European National University (age □ 17-22 years, gender □ 1213 female students (74.9%) and 407 male students (25.1%) who regularly attend PE classes. The survey was conducted using the suggested anonymous questionnaire. The study confirms that students usually eat at home or at their relatives, they do not follow a diet that is very important for people who are engaged in exercise regularly. Respondents have the symptoms of digestion disorders. They try to correct their body weight being on a diet.

Keywords: physical education (PE), students, regular meals.

Introduction

Food is an integral part of life of any living being. Without nutrients any existence is impossible, especially its development and growth. A human being, as a representative of *Homo sapiens*, should not just eat but take meals according to the current recommendations of WHO (World's Health Organization). The latter refers following the strategy of healthy meals to the effective mechanisms of predicting the non-catching diseases in the context of the "Health-2020" Program.

Nowadays, great importance is given to the supply of the population with the food of high quality. M.G. Prodanchuk, V.L. Koretsky, N.M. Orlova studied the dynamics of consumption of vital food ingredients and prevalence of alimentary-dependent diseases of the population [11]. L.F. Pavlotsky, N.V. Dudenko, L.P. Dimitrijevič describe the basics of physiology, nutrition and food safety issues [10], R.I. Ladanivskyy, U.B. Lototska, I.L. Tutik suggested the way of organization and principles of holding hygienic examination of food raw materials and foodstuffs [8]. V.K. Coast justifies the basics of healthy nutrition research [3].

Research results of contemporary scientists on the problem of nutrition in Ukraine in general and students in particular, show that various aspects of the issue are touched upon. So, identification of key factors that influence the behavior of Ukrainian consumers as for the choice of dining place was held [9], formation of modern systems of nutrition and pedagogical approaches to food culture were investigated [7], ability to use food for active influence on the performance of students was proved [13], the theoretical and practical aspects of nutrition of students in different living conditions, particularly during active physical training and sport were analyzed [5], students' usage of therapeutic food as a method of dealing with stress was examined [14], it was also proved that parents' education level does not influence the food consuming process of students [1]. It is obvious that, the efforts of practitioners and researchers are focused on improving the quality and feeding habits of students [12].

Objective is to analyze the attitude of the students to the accepted eating habits, to reveal irregularities in students' diets and possible indigestion.

Materials and methods

The experiment involves 1,620 students of Lesya Ukrainka Eastern European National University (age □ 17-22 years, gender □ 1213 female students (74.9%) and 407 male students (25.1%) who regularly attend PE classes. All the respondents agreed to participate in the survey and processing data. The questionnaire was conducted anonymously.

Results

As it is known an important component of a healthy lifestyle is balanced and rational eating habits. We support the idea that food is rational, only when it meets the physical needs of the body to provide physical health and active work [4, p 45]. Balanced nutrition should correspond to the balance law, when received energy equals energy spent, and the law of the correspondence of chemical composition of the diet to the physiological needs for nutrients [6, p. 28]. Improper eating habits (inadequate/ excessive for the energy value, badly balanced,

qualitatively saturated with harmful microorganisms, chemicals and other substances) leads to very adverse health consequences and even to obtaining severe acute and chronic diseases of alimentary nature [2, p 66]. Proper nutrition ensures normal growth and development of the body, determines the mental and physical development, provides optimal functioning of all organs and systems, forms immunity and adaptive reserves of the organism [7].

To investigate the presence/ absence of digestive disorders, we offered the students to answer the question of violation of normal alimentary processes, adherence to diet. Students were asked: "How often do you eat breakfast, second breakfast, lunch and dinner?" Answers impressed us. It was clarified that only 39% students eat breakfast every day, 27% have breakfast once a month or do not eat breakfast at all, 15% have it once a week and 19% several times a week. A full lunch is included in the daily meals of 79% students, 16% students have it few times a week, and there are few students (3%) who have hot, full lunch once a week and 2% (32 students) have lunch once a month or do not have any lunch at all. Regarding a snack after lunch, 35% of the students have it every day, 31% several times a week, 19% once a week and 15% of young respondents organize snack once a month. The majority of students 70% are dining daily, 18% eat dinner several times a week, 7% once a week and 81 students (5%) do not eat supper. The data are shown graphically in Figure 1.

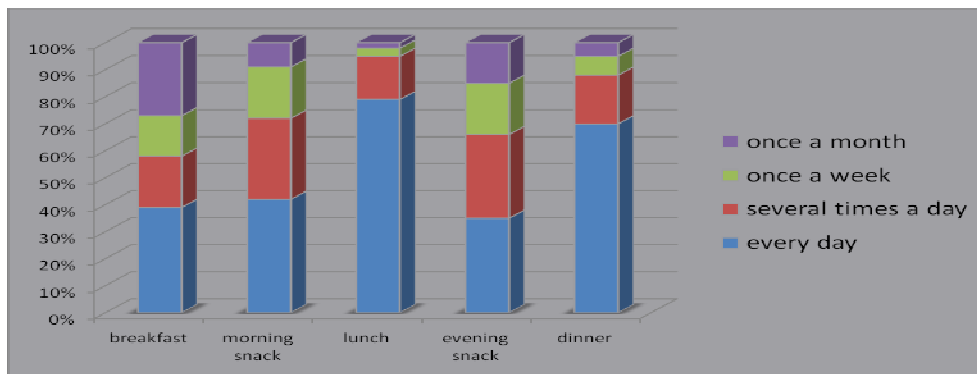


Fig.1. Distribution of students as for the frequency of having meals, %.

We understand that students are young people who are engaged in the obtaining knowledge. We were interested in whether students prepare meals themselves or visit the catering. It turned out that 65% of students have their breakfast and 62% have the morning snack at home. The same number of students 43% have lunch at home and in university canteens. 62% of students are having snack at home, 11% out, but only 3% have dinner out, and 88% prefer to have dinner at home. Detailed information about the places where students are having meals is presented in Figure 2.

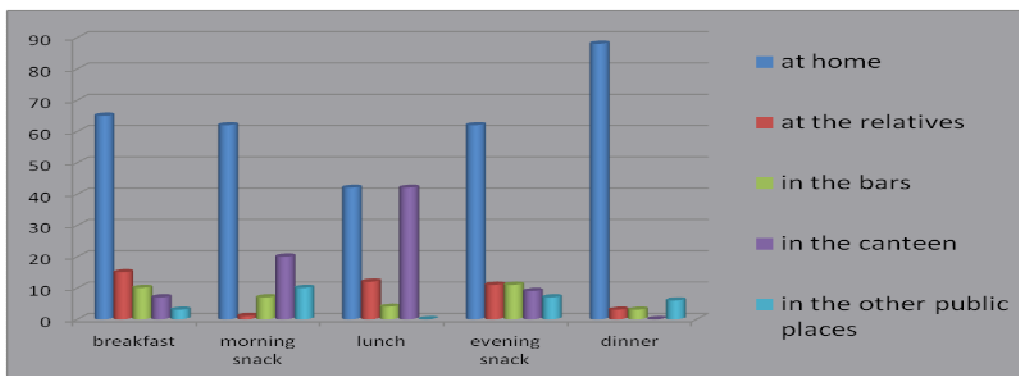


Fig. 2. Distribution of students as for the place of having meals, %.

The fact that students are mostly eating at home or at their relatives is positive, because homemade food is undoubtedly nutritious especially for young people. Thus, 91% of respondents drink fruit juice between meals, and 9% of students do not have snacks between regular meals.

Investigating eating conditions, we found that only 42% of all students do not eat at night, the rest of the students do that with with different frequency: 2% every night; 5% 3-4 times a week; 17% 1-2 times and 34% less than once a week.

To reveal possible violations of the food / digestive processes, we analyzed students' answers on the presence or absence of pathological processes that result from non-compliance of recommended diet. Thus, almost a third of the students pointed to the excessive consumption of food, one third for alternating excessive food intake and malnutrition; third to avoid eating. In addition, 17% of respondents have an insurmountable fear of gaining weight, and 10% even provoke vomiting after eating. The data are presented in Table1.

Students' Eating Disorders

Have you observed some of these processes?	Positive answer	
	n	%
excessive food intake (loss of control over food)	454	28%
insurmountable fear of gaining weight	276	17%
provoke vomiting after eating	162	10%
avoid eating	502	31%
alternation of excessive consumption of food and malnutrition	470	29%

Analysis of responses suggests that there are students who noticed 2 or more pathological process themselves. These data require further explanations as for healthy eating habits. Noticing any adverse change in health status or health one should consult a doctor.

Analysis of subjective feelings of students' repletion showed the following results: a feeling of satiety experience 64% of students every day and 26% □ 3-4 times a week. Hunger is felt by 20% students every day, 25% students □ 3-4 times a week, 38% □ 1-2 times a week. Feeling "ate too much" is experienced daily by 5% of students and 45% noticed this feeling at least once a week. Thus, one could argue that students do not overeat. However, more than half of young people (54%) have tried to lose weight, and 24% □ to gain weight (See Figure 3).

Tried to Gain Weight

Tried to Lose Weight

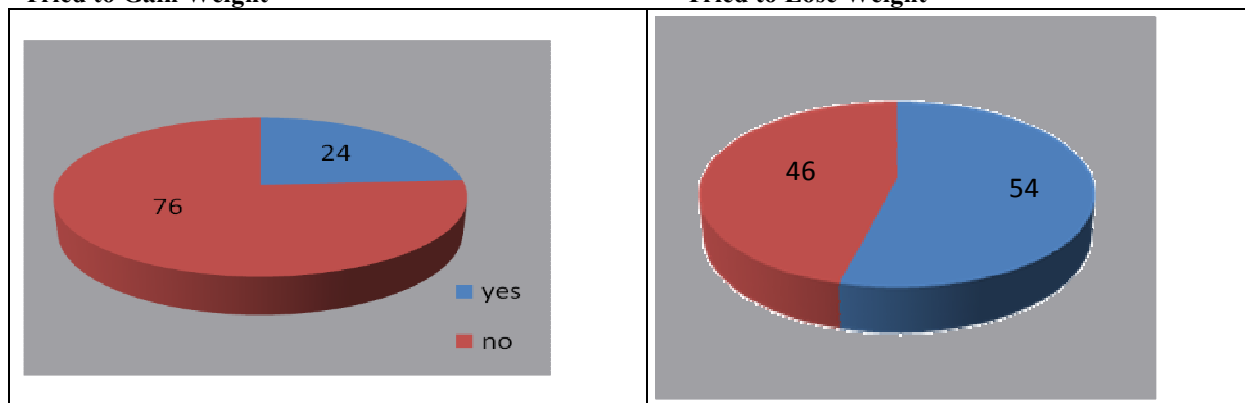


Fig. 3. Distribution of students on efforts to change body weight, %.

Student's desire to adjust their body weight using diet depends on the perception of their body constitution and structure. The survey results show that only 70% believe their body structure is normal, 5% of students indicate that they are thin; 10% □ that they are slim; 13% □ believe that they have excessive body weight and 2% consider themselves overweight (See Figure 4).

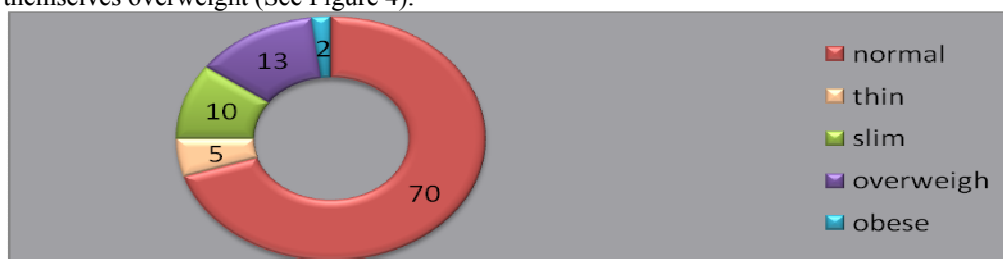


Fig. 4. Distribution of students as to the self-evaluation of the structure of their body, %.

So, despite the fact that the majority of students have normal weight and constitution, the students eat regularly, have indigestion, try to change their body weight using diet.

It should be noted that the issue of a balanced healthy regular meals is relevant not only in Ukraine. UN has developed guidelines on nutrition as a way to maintain a healthy lifestyle. It highlights the following:

- daily intake of 500 grams of various fruits and vegetables, approximately divided into 5 receptions. Vegetables and fruits especially desirable to use raw, without heat treatment;
- potatoes does not apply to groups recommended vegetables;
- Recommendations are not extrapolated to technologically processed fruits and vegetables. Juice and puree bought in the shops also cannot be recommended.

Discussion and conclusions

Thus, this study confirms that most students eat at home or at their relatives, they do not follow a diet, which is very important for people who are regularly engaged in exercises. Respondents have symptoms of nutritional disorder processes and try to adjust the weight of their body through diet. In our opinion, one of the effective mechanisms to improve the situation is to involve students in visiting lectures on healthy eating.

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