

Assessment of Night Eating Syndrome Among Late Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

With the increase in the trend of social networking, celebrations, over a couple of decades whether in the hostel or at home. Snacking has become an important aspect of activity. Today teen prefer snacks more than a proper meal. Skipping of meal and nibbling in between meal is a common practice. The main meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) are missed and total proportions of calories are consumed from the snacks eaten. Hence, this disordered eating behavior when continued may further lead to development of serious syndrome i.e., night eating syndrome. A purposive random sample comprising 188 males and 192 females (N=380), adolescents (18-22 years) were selected including hostlers and day scholars. The subjects were administered with self-organized questionnaire so to analyze the pattern of NES among them. Out of total 380 respondents, the numbers of hostlers were 211 and day scholars 169, while boys were 188 and girls were 192 in number. Results indicated that nearly half the percentage of adolescents snacked at night, out of which very few respondents met the criteria of NES, in which the number of hostlers were quite more than the day scholars, i.e., 76.3%.

Key words: *Adolescents, night eating syndrome*

INTRODUCTION

Late adolescents phase is the most active periods of life because of double demand of activity and growth, as a result nutritional needs are extremely important at this phase of time. Although snacking is a well-established eating pattern among adolescents and can be a source of needed nutrients and calories, it is important that they don't become a substitute for regular meal as it may further lead to cause the development of serious syndrome.

Night eating syndrome (NES) is one such very specific disorder where the affected individuals wake up several times during the night and is unable to fall back asleep unless they eat something. Individuals with the disorder consume one third or more of their daily calories after their evening meal, sometimes rising from their beds once or twice a night to snack. When sleeping and eating behaviors are simultaneously affected, often

there is spectrum of disease states that may result and often lead to NES.

These unhealthy eating behaviors, faulty food habits such as omitting main meal, and frequent snacking prevalent among adolescents, are also the cause of faulty food habits causing NES. Keeping the above in mind, the present study was undertaken to analyze the pattern of NES among the late adolescents.

METHODS

A sample of 380 adolescents (188 male and 192 female) within the age range of 18-22 years were randomly selected from the local five co-educational colleges of Chandigarh and hostlers of the same college were also included in the study. Respondents were administered with the self developed questionnaire to analyze their night snacking habit. Questions regarding the respondents sleeping habit, reasons and

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duration of night snacking were asked from the studied respondents. Mean, frequency, percentage and chi square test was used further for analysis of the data.

RESULTS

Looking at the NES perspective of the studied respondents, results indicated that out of total 380 adolescents, inadequate sleep was seen among more than half of the adolescents i.e. 55.8%, complaining with few brief awakenings at night. Highly significant results were seen when chi square value was applied between hostlers and day scholars ($\chi^2=79.14$ and P value <0.001). These specific respondents also complained of night snacking and almost 52.3% respondents snacked at night, out of which the percentage of hostlers were (76.3%) more than day scholars. Further it was also found that 30.7% respondents snacked almost up to 50% their total calories after evening meal while 1% of studied respondents snacked up to 75% of total calories after dinner meeting up the criteria of NES.

The results thus depicted that hostlers were highly involved in eating snacks after dinner than day scholars due to the reason that, hostlers have more fluctuating eating pattern as there is no one to take care of them, moreover late night sleeping and getting up late is also the reason behind late night snacking among adolescents.

DISCUSSION

As seen in the present study, hostlers group were more

seen to have night eating behaviors. As, the present study reveals, night snacking syndrome are associated with a number of harmful behaviors, physical and psychological consequences, including poor dietary quality and also skipping main meal and nibbling at night have led to significant changes seen in the eating pattern and life style of late adolescents, further under going night time snacking. As shown in the present study, these fluctuating and changed patterns together could force the youngsters at risk of various chronic illnesses further disrupting their health status and eating attitude, causing clinical eating disorders. So awareness regarding healthy eating is what needed to secure the health of youth and further improving the future generation of the country. Moreover, snacks and fast food items should be used as food items of leisure and should not take over as items of regular meals. Thus by educating youth we can build up strong nation, as youth are the strong foundation of the country and so it is important to identify strategies for the prevention of NES.

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