

### Nutritional Quality of Canteen Foods and Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Food Handlers in Health Promoting and Non-Health Promoting Private Secondary Schools of Pune City

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**Objectives:** To assess the nutritional quality of foods served in school canteens and Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of food handlers in Health Promoting and Non-Health Promoting Private Secondary Schools of Pune City, India.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted in school canteens of the private secondary schools, Pune City. Out of 316 private schools in the city, 32 private secondary schools with on-campus canteen facilities. All food handlers (n = 64) directly involved in food service were interviewed. Data collected included information on different types of foods served in the school canteens, food safety, sanitation and hygiene practices in the school canteens (a scorecard was prepared using FSSAI guidelines to assess school canteens' food safety, Sanitation and Hygiene of school canteens), and knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) of food handlers on food quality, food safety and Food Safety

and Standards Authority of India's (FSSAI) guidelines (a structured pre-tested questionnaire). The nutritional quality of foods served in school canteens was assessed using High Fat Sugar and Salt (HFSS) cut-offs of the FSSAI as healthy and unhealthy.

**Results:** Out of 32 schools, 25 were Non-Health Promoting (NHPS), and seven schools followed Health Promoting (HPS) concept. HPS had significantly higher provision for healthy food items than non-HPS (87.4% vs 46.2%;  $p < 0.001$ ). The HPS effectively reduced high-fat foods from the menu ( $p = 0.03$ ), however reduction in sugar and salt products was not sufficient. Food handlers from the HPS category had higher knowledge to identify healthy foods from the school menu ( $p < 0.001$ ) and had a better attitude towards healthy foods for school children ( $p \leq 0.04$ ). There was no significant difference in food safety practices of food handlers; however, HPS followed safer methods for serving foods ( $p < 0.001$ ). A few participants from both the school categories had attended any nutrition training program for food handlers (30% for HPS vs 25% Non-HPS;  $p = 0.68$ ).

**Conclusions:** A few private secondary schools implemented the HPS initiative in Pune City, which positively influenced the school food environment by introducing healthy foods and improved attitudes among food handlers towards healthy foods in school canteens.

**Funding Sources:** The study was not funded.