Assessment of Fruit and Vegetable Intake and Nutritional Status of Undergraduate Students at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya

Rankoth L.M., Daundasekara D.M.S.S.* and Rathnaweera W.[1]
Department of Food Science and Technology,
Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

The dietary patterns and nutritional status of young adults are important determinants of their health and performance. Therefore, the cross-sectional case study was conducted to explore the dietary practices and nutritional status of undergraduate students of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya. Further, the study aimed to determine the factors associated with fruit and vegetable intake and anthropometric indices of nutritional status. The study sample consisted of 186 students representing all academic years of the Faculty. The weight (kg), height (m), waist circumference (WC) and hip circumference (HC) were measured to calulate the Body Mass Index (BMI), and the Waist to Hip Ratio (WHR). The socio-demographic, lifestyle and dietary data were collected using an online survey. Data were analyzed using SPSS (version 26.0). The majority of the sample was Sinhala (96.7%), female (73.7%) students residing in the university hostels (65.6%). The mean age of the sample was 24.5 years. The commonly consumed fruits among the students were banana, avocado, wood apple, and papaya and the vegetables were carrot, beans, pumpkin, and beetroot. The mean fruit and vegetable intake of students per day was 1.37 (±1.34) and 2.42 (±1.66), respectively. Only 21.5% of the students achieved the recommended fruit intake, while 25.8% achieved the recommended vegetable intake. Based on the Asia-Pasific classification, 47.9% of students were normal weight while 23.1% were underweight, 19.4% were overweight and 9.7% were obese. The place of residence, province, age category and family income were significantly related to the fruit and vegetable intake ($P<0.05$). There was no significant difference ($P>0.05$) in the fruit and vegetable intake by the BMI categories. The factors associated with the BMI and WC were gender, time of stop eating food and water intake. Only gender and age categories were significantly related to the WHR ($P<0.05$).

Keywords: Cross-sectional case study, Dietary patterns, Nutritional status, Recommended dietary intake, Young adults

[1]Durdans Hospital, Colombo 03, Sri Lanka
*saumalid@agri.pdn.ac.lk