Dietary Behavior by meals intake or skipping in University Students

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to obtain information regarding to the dietary behavior by meal intake or skipping in university students. 227 students were surveyed about their dietary behavior knowledge using the questionnaire. Data was analyzed using the SPSS 17.0 program. The rate of skipping breakfast was 39.2%, 5.3% lunch and 4.4% dinner. Especially, women(30.8%) are more skipped the breakfast than male(8.4%). The rate of skipping breakfast was higher that the mother has a job(p=0.018) and moderate or not healthy subjective health status(p=0.001). According to three meals intake rate, dietary behavior was a significant difference between the breakfast taking with family group(p=0.000), eating out intake frequency(p=0.004). This study may provide basic information necessary for effective nutrition education in establishing right dietary behavior in university students.

Keywords: Meal intake & skipping, Dietary behavior, University students

1 Introduction

The changing economic conditions and living environment as well as rapidly increasing chronic diseases have continuously changed dietary behavior of South Koreans and WHO reported that about 60% of the causes of death around the globe in 2000 were related to chronic diseases and that seven out of ten risk factors of death were related to dietary life and physical activities [1]. Economic growth and temporal changes have developed the food-service industry and simplified dietary life, Westernized taste, convenience, and pursuit of consumption culture are contributing to the changing dietary life[2] ; problems with the dietary life in general, such as irregular meals, bad snacks, and changing dietary life, due to the changing dietary environment have not only caused diseases but also contributed to health promotion. Therefore, balanced, good-quality nutrient intake based on a good dietary life is an important living habit in maintaining health and preventing diseases personally. Dietary behavior is one of the human habits, which are established over a long period
of time, and good dietary behavior is not naturally acquired but can be maintained by intentional efforts.

The group aged from 20 to 29 that is currently characterized by a high rate of meal skipping and bad nutrition intake is in the transition period between adolescence and adulthood and the dietary behavior in this period may not only reflect the past dietary habit well but also indicate a possible dietary habit in the next stage of adulthood \[1\][3]. University students may form a population that represents this age group and good dietary behavior in this period is indispensable to maintenance of good nutrition status; therefore, good nutritional knowledge and dietary practice are very important. Contrary to middle and high school students having regular meals, however, university students are very likely to select foods and prepare a meal personally and may lead a very unstable dietary life: meal skipping, frequent snack consumption, excessive alcohol intake, and food selection based on incorrect nutritional knowledge \[4\][5][6].

The purpose of this study was to investigate dietary behavior by meal intake or skipping for university students in a single region and provide basic data for dietary life and nutrition education.

2 Method

2.1 Design

This is descriptive research aimed to investigate dietary behavior by meal intake or skipping for university students in a single region, induce a desirable dietary life for maintaining and promoting health, and provide basic data that could help develop a health promotion program.

2.2 Subjects

This study was conducted in university students in a single region from December 2012 to January 2013. The students took a lecture regarding nutrition and the researcher personally explained them the purpose and anonymity of the research and then distributed self-administered questionnaires to 243 students who agreed to the purpose. With the exception of 16 questionnaires containing incomplete responses, the remaining 227 copies (response rate: 93.4%) were finally analyzed.

2.3 Instrument

1) General Characteristics
The general characteristics in this study included gender, age, monthly family income, father’s employment status, mother’s employment status, and obesity level.
2) Meal intake or skipping
The items about meal intake or skipping were drawn from the nutrition area in the 2007 National Health and Nutrition Survey to estimate the rate of breakfast, lunch, and supper intake and there were six items about intake or skipping of three meals a day: breakfast intake or skipping two days before, lunch intake or skipping two days before, supper intake or skipping two days before, breakfast intake or skipping a day before, lunch intake or skipping a day before, and supper intake or skipping a day before.

3) Dietary behavior
Dietary behavior referred to the rate of skipping three meals a day and was determined on the basis of the rate of breakfast, lunch, and supper skipping, the rate of having a meal with family, frequency of snack intake, and frequency of eating out.

2.4 Data Analysis
The collected data were statistically analyzed using SPSS/WIN 17.0. Descriptive statistics was used to examine the subjects’ general characteristics, meal intake or skipping, and dietary behavior.

3 Results

3.1 General Characteristics of Subjects
Of a total of 227 subjects, 189 (83.3%) were female and 38 (16.7%) were male. The mean age was 20.82 years and 148 subjects (65.2%) were aged from 18 to 20. Monthly family income ranged from 1.01 million to 2 million won and from 3.01 to 4 million won, respectively, for 64 subjects (28.2%); 200 (88.1%) had their fathers employed and 178 (78.4%) had their mothers employed. The body mass index (BMI) ranged from 18 to less than 23.0 for 168 subjects (74.0%) in the normal weight group, was less than 18 for 36 (15.9%) in the underweight group, ranged from 23 to 24.9 for 15 (6.6%) in the overweight group, and was 25 or more for 6 (3.5%) in the obese group.

3.2 Meal Intake or Skipping and Dietary Behavior of Subjects
As for meal intake or skipping, 89 subjects (39.2%) skipped breakfast, 12 (5.3%) skipped lunch, and 10 (4.4%) skipped supper.

As for the rate of having a meal with family, 94 (41.6%) had breakfast together, 61 (27%) had lunch together, and 118 (52.2%) had supper together. 68 (30.0%) had a snack once a day, 51 (22.5%) had a snack every two days, and 51 (22.5%) rarely had a snack; 84 (37.0%) ate out once a day and 74 (22.5%) ate out at least twice a day.
3.3. Dietary Behavior by Meal Intake or Skipping of Subjects

As for dietary behavior by meal intake or skipping, the subjects who didn’t have breakfast, lunch, or supper with family were more likely to skip breakfast. Those who had a snack and ate out at least once a day were more likely to skip breakfast and there were statistically significant differences in the rate of having breakfast with family (p=0.000) and in frequency of eating out (p=0.004).

The subjects who didn’t have breakfast, lunch, or supper with family were more likely to skip lunch and those who had a snack and ate out at least once a day were more likely to skip lunch. There were statistically significant differences in the rate of having lunch with family (p=0.029).

The subjects who didn’t have lunch with family and ate out at least once a day were more likely to skip supper, with no statistically significant difference.

4 Conclusions

This study has analyzed dietary behavior by meal intake or skipping for university students, who are in the transition period into adulthood in the life cycle, and suggests the need of good dietary behavior as well as regular meals in pursuit of their health promotion. In particular, university students were very likely to skip breakfast and had bad dietary behavior on the basis of frequency of snack intake and eating out. Since university students currently giving less consideration to their own health may play a leading role in managing the dietary life and promoting health at home and in society as parents of the next generation, therefore, it is necessary to develop nutrition and health management programs for health promotion as well as for disease prevention.

Reference