



HORMONAL VARIATION DUE TO JUNK FOOD CONSUMPTION: SOCIAL MEDIA AWARENESS

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ABSTRACT

In recent days, especially in India the people have become increasingly addicted to consuming the junk food. But people of India they consume food street side. Even though they are aware that such food provides only taste and lacks of nutritional value, day by day junk food consuming people become more. Compared to the dietary habits of the past, today's food can be seen to have a negative impact on human health, both physically. In particular, it can be observed that it is affecting the hormonal balance in girls. Due to these hormonal changes, many girls are reaching menarche (puberty) at an earlier age. Along with this, they are also experiencing various problems during the menstrual cycle, such as mood swings, acne, changes in physical health. Additionally, it would not be wrong to say that social media has become a good platform to create awareness about people's health. In major platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook, doctors, health experts, and fitness bloggers are providing all information on what kind of food consumption is necessary for our body in today's times. They are providing information about the troubles caused by junk food and street food. This study analyzes the effects of junk food consumption and understands how awareness is being created on this subject through social media. Through the content analysis method, it has been understood how social media is creating awareness to eliminate problems caused by junk food consumption and what its influence is like.

KEYWORDS : Junk Food, Hormone, Menarche, Menstrual Cycle, Social Media, Awareness.

INTRODUCTION

People are adapting very quickly from a traditional lifestyle to a modern lifestyle. Due to this, many changes are seen in humans; as an example of this, it is difficult for today's young men and women to build a life for as many years as humans of that time. According to some studies, it has been found that the daily dietary habits consumed by humans are a major reason for this kind of change. This type of change has also had a significant impact on the menstrual cycle of women, and women are suffering from ill health due to hormonal imbalance.

Today's world is moving towards innovation, and people are always looking for novelty in everything. Mainly, a difference in people's health style and lifestyle can be observed in recent decades. Compared to the previous generation, children and youth who have no activity and are disinterested, starting from dietary habits, are increasing today. Due to this, their body's health is suddenly fluctuating. They are facing problems like heart attack at a young age, diabetes, extreme obesity, or weakness. Because of this, the number of people suffering from heart attacks is increasing day by day. As known through the media, 22 people died of heart attacks in 40 days during the months of June and July in the Hassan district of Karnataka. Apart from this, according to the WHO-UNICEF 2024 report, the rate of obesity among children aged 5 to 15 has increased by 18% due to junk food consumption. According to a 2023 study by the American CDC, the cardiovascular death rate among fast food consumers is 15% higher. According to some studies, 20% to 30% of children are facing early menarche due to fast food consumption. Along with all this, more attention is being given to beauty, and by following unhealthy diet methods without information about them, many variations can be seen in the bodies of today's children.

Hormone

Hormones are biochemical fluids released from the endocrine glands of the body; these control body growth, emotions, sleep, hunger, and the menstrual functions of girls. Hormones like insulin, estrogen, progesterone, melatonin, oxytocin, etc., are present in the human body.

Menstrual Cycle

Menarche is the first menstruation seen in girls. This is a natural biological process that takes place every month in women. This usually starts within 12 to 14 years, which means the female is ready to conceive from here. Every month, the endometrium membrane inside the uterus grows with the help of estrogen and progesterone hormones. If pregnancy does not occur at that time, the level of progesterone hormone in the body decreases and the endometrium membrane detaches from the uterus. This is called the monthly period. This process is a common occurrence in every woman's body, and the endometrium layer proceeds through a cycle of construction-evolution-shedding. The influence of hormones in the body is the reason for the fluctuation in this process, and junk food is the reason for this influence.

Junk Food

Food that has no nutrients and is high in fat, calories, sugar, salt, and spices is called junk food. This type of food provides taste but is harmful to health. For example, pizza, burger, cold drinks (soft drinks), cake, prepared foods, etc. Milk, curd, chips, chocolate, jam, soft drinks, etc., are prepared with the intention that colors used for food items and stored foods can be used for a longer time. But these cause imbalance in the balanced hormonal state in the body. It causes troubles such as digestion problems, skin problems, weight variation, etc.

Dietary Habits

Looking from the time of ancestors, the primitive man who used to hunt and eat animals, after some time, reached the stage of eating the food they consumed by boiling or roasting it. As the human's intellectual level increased, he started producing grains and began consuming good quality food. Fruits, vegetables, and food grains provided vitamins, protein, minerals, etc., required for the body. Because of this, our elders were centenarians. But in today's stressful life, more emphasis is given to time, and because of this, it would not be wrong to say that the consumption of ready-made foods, cold drinks, fast food, and street food, which are prepared instantly and provide taste, is increasing through trends in today's generation. Today's delicious foods satisfy hunger but do not provide the nutrients required for the body; therefore, it can be observed that today's generation is falling prey to one disease or another. In a research paper titled "An Exploratory Study on

Food Addiction among Indian Youth," 13.3% of youth are addicted to fast food, while in a study "Junk Food Addiction across Generations in Urban Areas of Karnataka," 16% of people were found to be junk food addicts, and another 14% are dependent to a small extent. From this, it is known that the youth are mostly dependent on such dietary habits.

Objectives

1. To analyze how junk food consumption affects hormonal changes in girls.
2. To learn about the social media that gives the most importance to menstrual hormone balance.
3. To understand how social media has influenced coming out of hormonal imbalance.

Literature Review

Annapurnamma C (1989): In the book "Sahaja Jaivika Kriya Rutuchakra" (Natural Biological Process Menstrual Cycle), this is the first time a book with complete information about the menstrual cycle was published. She has provided detailed information about the stages seen in this process, which stays with women for 3 decades from the starting stage of the menstrual cycle, and the changes that occur in women during that time. From this study, one can learn about finding solutions to diseases that occur during the menstrual cycle through exercise.

Veena S. Bhatt (2018): In the book "Rutuchakra Suttamutta" (Around the Menstrual Cycle), she has explained the problems from the beginning to the end of menstruation through conversations with patients who come to her, detailing what the problems are like and what the solutions are. It can be observed that deaths occur due to not receiving proper treatment for fluctuations during the menstrual cycle. Due to this, women and children suffer mentally; the information in this book is helpful to come out of this.

Samreen Latif (2022): "Junk Food Consumption in Relation to Menstrual Abnormalities Among Adolescent Girls: A Comparative Cross-Sectional Study." In this study, menstrual abnormalities in adolescent girls due to junk food consumption were evaluated. Data was collected through a cross-sectional method among 200 girls based on a questionnaire. In that, 40% of girls had an irregular menstrual cycle, and 56% of girls were suffering from dysmenorrhea. The main point learned from this study is that junk food consumption is having a negative impact on menstruation.

Research Method

This study has adopted a qualitative content analysis method to analyze the influence of junk food consumption on the menstrual cycle of women and how it is being reflected in public awareness and social media. In this study, selected social media posts, educational brochures or awareness campaigns, and doctor interviews are selected to analyze how subjects related to junk food and the menstrual cycle are presented.

Sampling Method

Using a purposive sampling model for this study, only information sources from doctors, fitness experts, and nutritionists required for content analysis have been selected. Certain selected posts, videos, blogs, and vlogs published on social media regarding the impact of junk food consumption on the menstrual cycle of women have been selected for analysis. The purpose of the sample is to understand how, due to the influence of social media, women are turning towards nutritious food as variations are occurring in the menstrual cycle specifically due to junk food consumption. It aims to understand how social media plays a role in this, creates awareness of such subjects, and acts as a medium that inspires lifestyle changes while conducting positive discussions about health.

Data Analysis

In this study, data analysis involves a close examination of selected content published on social media regarding hormonal variation caused by junk food consumption. Captions and writings are studied by taking into account posts of selected nutritionists, health-related reels, and blogs. Also, it has been analyzed how food awareness videos appearing on social media have impacted the dietary habits of women.

Content Analysis

In recent days, social media has been a major platform for health and food-related awareness, containing most of the content explaining hormonal variation and menstrual troubles caused by junk food consumption. Therefore, I have selected the content analysis method for this research. This study examines how hormonal variation, menstrual cycle problems, the impact of food habits, and doctors' advice are presented using health blogs, videos, and other subjects published on social media.

The purpose of the study is to understand how these subjects are helpful in creating awareness among young women, bringing about lifestyle changes, and inspiring the selection of healthy food.

Through this analysis, one can know how social media is functioning as a medium connecting subjects related to women's daily lives.

Impact of Junk Food Consumption on the Hormones of Girls:

Hormones function normally in the bodies of girls. As children grow, they step-by-step become dependent on outside food. By consuming junk food, fast food, bread, potato, and bakery snacks excessively, female hormones such as estrogen and progesterone in the body perform their functions rapidly; due to this, girls are reaching menarche early, and the menstrual cycle that happens once every month can be seen happening twice. As known through a 2020 study conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research, it has been found that junk food consumption is rapidly increasing the level of a hormone called leptin (fat cells). According to the UNICEF (2023) report, the average age of first menarche in India is now 11.5 years, which has decreased from 12.5 years in the previous decade. Medical experts have opined that changes in dietary habits are the reason for all this. The root cause for all this is the change in dietary habits. Due to the imbalance of female hormones, PCOD (Polycystic Ovarian Disease) problems are seen in women. Because ovulation does not occur according to time, fluctuations occur in the menstrual cycle, and this has become the cause for infertility in 50% of women (Dr. Veena S. Bhatt, 2018, page 39). If proper treatment is not taken at the right time, problems such as diabetes, breast cancer, uterine cancer, and stones in the kidneys occur.

Social Media that gives the most importance to Menstrual Hormone Balance:

Today's Digital world Social media is one of the friend to all ages of people, because we spend most of our time using social media. But it would not be wrong to say that these media have taken a prominent place in providing information about health in the present times. In Brooke Auxier's (2021) study paper "Social Media Use in 2021," it was found that 87.6% of people watch YouTube. Because long-duration videos are available to be posted on YouTube, it is helpful for viewers to get complete information in one medium. Apart from this, since short-duration reels are seen in other media, the amount of information availability there is low.

Influence of Social Media to come out of Hormonal Imbalance:

Consumption of a good type of food is very important to keep various hormonal changes occurring in the body under

control. Elders previously consumed nutrient-rich food when there was no adulteration, but today it is being known through media reports that adulteration is occurring in every food item. In such a situation, it is necessary to consume the best among the available food. Doctors, health experts, fitness vlogger, and even common housewives are sharing the methods they follow on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook to follow these systematically and provide awareness about them; thus, they are providing inspiration to viewers to consume good and nutritious food. Apart from this, subjects under discussion like the menstrual cycle, menstrual cycle problems, along with other diseases resulting from this, and the dietary habits and exercises to be followed to prevent them are being provided, and the number of people following them today has increased.

CONCLUSION

Since social media is used by people of all age groups today, it can be observed that it is having both positive and negative impacts on their usage. Along with this, regarding this study, social media is a platform close to common people because answers are found on social media even before approaching experts to come out of the problems experienced by children and women due to junk food consumption. Through such platforms, people are learning to change their dietary habits and what kind of nutritious food we need today.

Results of the Study

1. It is learned to what extent junk food consumption is having an ill effect on health today.
2. Information about diseases resulting from changes in the body due to junk food consumption is learned.
3. It is found that hormonal variation is a major reason for adolescent girls to reach menarche early.
4. Information is obtained regarding what problems have to be faced due to the impact of dietary habits on the menstrual cycle.
5. Social media is a major platform, and it is conducive to making changes in food style through the education available on them.

Suggestions

1. Parents should keep children away from the consumption of processed and junk foods.
2. Nutrient-rich and good quality food should be consumed.
3. Body weight should be maintained equally from children to adults.
4. Exercise has become inevitable to resolve problems caused by junk food consumption.
5. It is better to see that the menarche of girls does not happen early; that is, it is the duty of parents to properly follow the children's lifestyle starting from their dietary habits.

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