
The Relation between Fast Food and Anal Disease in Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

Background: In recent years, diets have changed rapidly in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) because the fast food diet is replacing the traditional Arabic diet. Consumption of fast food is believed to increase the risk of obesity and diabetes, and the more frequent fast food consumption may have serious detrimental effects on health. The aim of this study was to determine whether the change of dietary habits in Saudi people would result in more anal disease. **Patients & Method:** Food intake and presence of anal diseases was assessed by a questionnaire was performed on 643 Saudi people, selected randomly from restaurants areas in two main malls in Hofuf, Saudi Arabia. **Result:** The highest fast food consumption rate was in young age group (10-20 years). Most of the participants (78%) who took more than one fast food meal per day had lower water intake and less vegetable consumption. 90% of those had constipation and 67% had anal disease. 52% sought medical advice for anal problems. **Conclusion:** The amount of fast food consumption is increasing in Saudi community mainly in young generation. This was clearly associated with health problems including obesity and anal diseases.

Keywords: Fast, food, junk, Saudi Arabia

Introduction

Background

Junk food, fast food and trash food are all definitions of a quick, unhealthy, hunger satisfying food, which are easy to make and easy to consume. They are low in nutritional value with a high caloric value. Junk food contains high level of refined sugar, white flour, polyunsaturated fats, salts and numerous food additives but lacking in protein, vitamin and fibers. Junk food is popular because of their simplicity of manufacture, consumption and good taste (i). In the last decades, there have been substantial increases in mean body weight in wealthy countries. A study showed over the last two decades there is increased consumption of fast foods and sugar-dense beverages (ii). Simultaneously, technological advances – cars, elevators, escalators, and remotes have led to a decrease in level of activity. Traditional dependence on locally grown natural products such as dates, vegetables, wheat and

has also shifted. Changes in food consumption, socioeconomic and demographic factors, physical activity, and urbanization are being important factors that contribute to the increased prevalence of obesity in the Arab gulf countries (iii). There are few studies about the consumption of fast food in Saudi Arabia, but no study has discussed the rule of dietary patterns on lower gastrointestinal problems and anal diseases, therefore we conducted our study to find out whether there is a correlation between fast food consumption and anal problems.

Patients & Methods

A cross-sectional study conducted by a questionnaire in 643 Saudi people selected randomly from restaurants areas in two main mall in Hofuf, Saudi Arabia. The questionnaire aimed to assess the different dietary intake frequency, the trends of fast food consumption, and to study the presence of anal diseases among the participants (Table 1).

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Results

The current study was applied on 643 Saudi people. 78% of took more than one fast food meal per day and also had low water intake and less fruits and vegetable intake. 90% of the participants had constipation, and 67% had anal problems. 52% sought medical advice for anal problems.

We have categorized the study group according to age to analyze the variation of the dietary patterns and anal complaints among different ages, As shown in table (1). we notice that the highest percentage of frequent

fast food intake is in age group 10-20 years with a prevalence of 85% of males and 83% of females followed by 20-30 years age group in 75% of males and 84% of females. Fruit and water intake is very low in all age groups except for those older than 30 year age (45% of males and 43% of females). Coffee and tea consumption was increasing with age and highest in those older than 30 years (62% of males and 77% of females). Constipation was very prevalent in all groups. Anal diseases were absent in the group younger than 10 years. Highest prevalence of anal diseases were in age of 20-30 followed by 10-20 years group.

Table 1: Food consumption in relation to age & gender

	AGE < 10 YEARS		AGE 10-20 YEARS		AGE 20- 30 YEARS		>30 YEARS	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
% > 2 MEALS/DAY	61 (55%)	79 (48%)	115 (85%)	103 (83%)	92 (75%)	89 (84%)	63 (35%)	41 (18%)
% FRUIT/DAY	(4%)	(6%)	(7%)	(5%)	(15%)	(11%)	(45%)	(43%)
% > 5 CUP OF WATER /DAY	(14%)	(18%)	(9%)	(8%)	(10%)	(11%)	(60%)	(57%)
% > 2 CANE OF SODA /DAY	(86%)	(83%)	(91%)	(92%)	(94%)	(92%)	(24%)	(23%)
% > 5 CUP OF TEA, COFFE /DAY	(2%)	(1%)	(25%)	(28%)	(35%)	(42%)	(62%)	(77%)
% > 1 DEFECATION/DAY	(3%)	(2%)	(5%)	(4%)	(7%)	(6%)	(12%)	(23%)
% ANAL DISEASE	(0 %)	(0 %)	(47%)	(34%)	(67%)	(71%)	(17%)	(19%)
% SEEK MEDICAL CARE	(0%)	(0%)	(45%)	(38%)	(59%)	(62%)	(23%)	(29%)

Discussion

We have revised some literatures regarding fast food and its health effects in Saudi Arabia. One study has shown prevalence of fast food consumption among Saudi girls. Among study participants, 95.4% consume restaurants' fast food and 79.1% eat fast food at least once weekly. Burgers and carbonated soft drinks were the main kind. (iv) In our study, we found that more than 75% of males and females of the same age group (10-30 years) consumed two or more fast food meals per day. Another study in Al-Ahsa, KSA on school children ranged from 10-14 years has shown that prevalence of overweight was 14.2% and obesity was 9.7%. Frequent consumption of fast food, low servings per day of fruits, vegetables, milk and dairy products, with frequent consumption of sweets/candy and carbonated drinks were all predictors of obesity and overweight. (v) These predictors were all present in our study.

Another study conducted on secondary school Saudi students of both genders in Al-Khobar city, Eastern Saudi Arabia. High prevalence of overweight and obesity recorded. No significant difference was found between both genders. (vi) This study has also revealed that knowledge of healthy diets among school students was very inadequate. (vii) Also in our study, there was no significant difference between males and females. A study at Asser Central Hospital, Abha 2010 revealed a clear change in the frequency of upper gastrointestinal endoscopy lesions detected recently compared to a decade ago with an increasing prevalence of reflux esophagitis and hiatus hernia. This could be attributed to changes in lifestyle and dietary habits such as more consumption of fat and fast food. (viii) Our study proved that such dietary habits can also lead to anal diseases.

In conclusion Awareness regarding fast food facts is very deficient in every corner of the society. Increased public awareness regarding eating habits and encouragement of physical activity and exercise is required especially for children. School-based health education should be developed to help children to get healthy eating behaviours.

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