
THE KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS EATING AMONGST ADOLESCENTS IN CHEADLE, UNITED KINGDOM AND KARACHI, PAKISTAN

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Back Ground: Childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions: Some 4.7 million youths between 6 and 17 years of age are overweight or obese. The number of over-weight youths (11%) has more than doubled over the past 30 years. Obesity has links with disease such as diabetes, heart disease, sleep disorders and some forms of cancers. Developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle are essential for the prevention of obesity.

Methods: In a cross sectional study we aimed to investigate and compare the attitudes towards healthy eating and obesity in adolescent students in Pakistan and the UK. The sample size for this study consisted of 618 students in total. A self administered anonymised questionnaire was given to the students and they were to answer questions regarding eating and exercise.

Results: A Total of 151 students were recruited from the UK, while 467 students were recruited from schools in Pakistan. 5.4% of the students in the UK and 2.6% students in Pakistan were obese. The reasons for students' different eating habits varied between both countries; in the UK an increase in eating was linked to stress while in Pakistan it was linked to cravings. In both the UK and in Pakistan, a high percentage of students took part in physical activity, 80% and 81.8% respectively. There were some similarities in eating habits, with similar numbers of students refraining from eating unhealthy foods in both the countries.

Conclusion: We found significant differences in BMI and reasons for overeating when comparing students in Pakistan and the UK. These findings have implications for designing interventions