ASSESSMENT OF THE FOOD HABITS IN A GROUP OF ADOLESCENTS FROM DOROHOI, BOTOSANI COUNTY

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Introduction. Eating habits are formed in the first years of life and sometimes persist throughout life. It is necessary to correctly evaluate the nutrition of adolescents in order to know the problems that arise and to be able to intervene effectively where needed. Problems may arise related to the excessive concern for the physical appearance or the difficult economic situation in the family. Nutritional educational programs will have to be correctly oriented, which will lead to an increase in their efficiency.

Aim. Knowledge of adolescent nutrition; evaluating the differences that appear depending on the age group; assessment of food intake in the morning and at snack time; evaluation of existing deficiencies in young people's nutrition.

Material and methods. The study was carried out on a group of 135 young people from the "Grigore Ghica" College in Dorohoi. Students from the 11th grade (67 students) and the 12th grade (68 students) were included in the study, at an age when eating habits are formed and even well established. A weekly frequency of food consumption questionnaire was applied with questions oriented in two directions represented by the morning/snack food intake and the weekly frequency with which dairy products, fish, fruits and sweets appear in the menus. The statistical processing by classes was done with the help of the Pearson test.

Results. The first aspect studied is the one related to food intake at breakfast and snacks. The majority of students (38.51%) admit that they rarely eat food in the morning. Worrying is the percentage of 17.03 students who do not eat anything in the morning. Only 23.70% of students eat breakfast every day. The differences calculated by class are statistically insignificant and point to the existence of similar eating habits among the students in the study group. In this context, snacking becomes essential and is present daily in the diet of 54.81% of students, to which 25.92% of teenagers mark the "often" option. The calculated differences by class are statistically insignificant. The second aspect studied is related to the weekly intake of food products of animal and plant origin. Dairy products are consumed mostly once a week (36.29%) or 2-3 times a week (31.85%), a result that does not correspond to the norms of rational nutrition. The differences obtained are statistically insignificant. Fish is present in the menus in most cases (43.70%) once a week; there are also 40.74% students who do not consume it at all, with insignificant differences calculated by class. This significant percentage of young people denying fish consumption may be a warning sign, as consumption of this food during adolescence may be associated with some cognitive benefits and is believed to influence later neuropsychological performance in adulthood. Fruits are consumed mostly 2-3 times a week (36.29%) or daily (34.81%). There are no teenagers who do not consume fruit, an aspect that must be known in order to be able to correctly orient nutritional educational programs. Sweets are present in menus 2-3 times a week (28.14%), 4-6 times a week (28.88%) or daily (27.40%). There are still 1.48% teenagers who do not consume sweets. The calculated differences are statistically insignificant.

Conclusions. The students in the study group have many problems that must be solved through education. Systematic education related to morning food consumption is required because the learning activity is demanding for the nervous system.