Association of Junk Food Consumption with Depression in Adolescents Living in High and Low Socio-economic Districts of Tehran

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Abstract

Background and Objective: The importance of healthy eating for mental health has been proven in previous studies. In many studies, unhealthy dietary patterns and less nutritious snacks have been associated with depression. This study designed to determine the association of junk foods consumption (JFC) with levels of depression in adolescents living in high and low socio-economic districts of Tehran

Materials and Methods: In this cross-sectional study, 200 female adolescents aged 13–18 years were selected through a random sampling from a school in district 2 (as a high socioeconomic status [SES] region) and 18 (as a low SES region) of Tehran. JFC was assessed by a 24-items self-administered semi-quantitative F.F.Q that was designed and its face and content validity was approved by Nutrition expert pannel. Depression status was assessed by a validated “Beck” long form questionnaire through interview. Data were analysed in SPSS-21 software and chi-square test was applied.

Results: The mean (SD) age of the adolescents was 16.1 (1.1) years and their total depression score 13.4 (9.5). The mean chocolates, sweets, beverages, puffs, cakes, biscuits, and fast foods consumptions was 4.5 (4), 1.5 (1.5), 4.5 (5.5), 3 (3), 3.4 (3), 2.1 (2.3) and 1.5 (1.3) serving/week, respectively. Also, the mean total JFC was higher in low SES school children (26.7 (15.7) vs. 23.4 (13.1) serving/week). Comparison of schools with low SES with high SES showed higher percentage of adolescents with had moderate and severe depression (26% vs. 12%) and a lower percentage of them had mild depression (25% vs. 41%). But in both districts, higher percentage of those with normal or mild degrees of depression (29.5% vs. 22.5%) were at the lowest tertile and higher percentage of individuals with moderate-to-severe depression (10.5% vs. 4.5%) were at highest tertile of JFC (P<0.05).

Conclusion: High consumption of junk food significantly associated with high levels of depression in the studied adolescent girls in both high and low SES group.

Keywords: Junk food, Depression, Adolescents

Conflict of Interest: None of the authors has any conflict of interest to disclose.

Ethical publication statement: We confirm that we have read the Journal's position on issues involved in ethical publication and affirm that this report is consistent with those guidelines.