

B23 Demographic, eating behaviour characteristics and fruit and vegetable intake in children aged 4 to 6 years: Are they related?

Nurfahana Diana MN¹ and Che Nur Hasniza CR^{1,2}

¹Department of Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Human Development, Sultan Idris Education University, Tanjong Malim, Perak, Malaysia

²Fakulti Sains Sosial, University College Bestari, Putera Jaya, Bandar Permaisuri, Setiu, Terengganu, Malaysia

Fruit and vegetable are packed with nutrients and that high consumption of fruit and vegetables offer various health benefits. However, the consumption has been reported to be below recommendation among children worldwide. Literature shows that eating habit in adulthood remains through adulthood, therefore practicing healthy eating habit since early age is crucial. The aim of this study was to determine factors associated with fruit and vegetable intake among children aged 4 to 6 years. 278 children were involved where questionnaires were distributed in 7 preschools in Setiu, Terengganu, Malaysia. Parents were asked to complete the questionnaire to assess demographic data, parental feeding practice, child's eating behaviour and child's fruit and vegetable intake and liking. Results showed that parental education and frequency of purchasing fruit and vegetables had significant associations with fruit and vegetable intake among children. Frequency of family mealtime was associated with only vegetable intake. Furthermore, child's eating behaviour was found to be related to fruit and vegetable intake. Three eating behaviour characteristics namely emotional overeating, satiety responsiveness and food fussiness were significantly associated with vegetable intake, while five behaviour characteristics (enjoyment of food, food responsiveness, emotional overeating, satiety responsiveness and emotional undereating) had significant associations with fruit intake. Additional robust regression analyses showed that only frequency of purchasing fruit and vegetable was the predictor of both fruit and vegetable intake. It can be concluded that there are many factors involved in determining fruit and vegetable intake among children especially demographic status, parental feeding practice and child's eating behaviour.