

A Study on Awareness among Young Adults towards Health and/or Nutritional Benefits of Millets

Manisha Trivedi¹, Radhika Godbole², Dipali Saxena³, Shweta Keswani⁴

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Abstract

In the current scenario there are various degenerative diseases occurring among Young adults including diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and other nutritional deficiencies due to lifestyle changes, lowered immunity and many other reasons. To prevent such problems there is a need to find easy, simple and cost effective solution. One such solution is to eat nutritionally healthy food, one of them are millets. Millets are small seeded grasses that belong to 'Poaceae' family. They have various health and nutritive benefits as they are good source of various vitamins, minerals, Antioxidants etc. Millets are locally grown crops that are good from agriculture point of view. They are grown in regions of African and Asian countries these includes Sorghum, pearl millet, finger millet, little millet and many more. This study was focused on young adults of age 20 to 30 years old residing within India, as they are the current as well as the future of the country, their health is important for the growth and development of our country. The study was based on the survey research methodology, a self made questionnaire was prepared for the study purpose. The main objectives of this study were: to study the awareness among young adults regarding their knowledge about nutritional benefits of millets, to study the awareness among young adults regarding their knowledge about health benefits of millets and to know about the consumption of millets among young adults. This study showed that majority of young adults knew that millets are nutritive as well as they have many health benefits but they do not consume as much millets in their diet so there is still need to provide them some solutions in the form of some delicious recipes etc. Also there is need to promote the awareness regarding millets and is need to conduct more research on this topic.

Keywords: Millets; Degenerative Diseases; Antioxidants; Immunity; Nutritive benefits.

INTRODUCTION

Millets are small seeded grasses that belong to Poaceae family. They are grown as cereal crops or as fodder and human food around world. Millets are important crops in countries such as Africa and Asia (especially in Nigeria and India), it is cultivated mostly in developing countries. The most commonly grown millet is pearl millet. Millets are cultivated due to their short growing season and productivity; they can grow even under dry and hot climatic conditions. In the current scenario there are various problems that occur in the

Author Affiliation: ^{1,3}Assistant Professor, ²M.Sc. Student, Food and Nutrition, Shri Vaishnav Institute of Home Science, Indore 452002, Madhya Pradesh, India.

Corresponding Author: Manisha Trivedi, Assistant Professor, Food and Nutrition, Shri Vaishnav Institute of Home Science, Indore 452002, Madhya Pradesh, India.

E-mail: manishatrivedi@svvv.edu.in

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people due to reduced immunity or certain other reasons here, problems refers to non communicable diseases such as heart diseases, cancers and other such issues so there is increase need of developing an easy, simple and cost effective way to fight such health problems and build immunity against them which can be possible by eating nutritionally rich and healthy food items that improve our health and will give us long term benefits. Millet is one of such food item which may help us in building immunity and prevent such diseases by improving our nutritional status and keeping our body fit and healthy. India is one of the top most producers of the millets.

Nutritive benefits of Millets

Millets are known to have immense nutritive value as they are rich in macronutrients as well as micronutrients; the micronutrient category of nutrients includes vitamins and minerals. They are required in small quantities but are very essential to maintain certain functions of our body. Carbohydrates contribute to major part in our diet as they are main source of energy for us; millets contain about 65 to 75% of carbohydrates. Proteins are required for tissue building and repairing, millets contain about 7 to 12% of proteins its nutritional value depends upon the type of amino acids present. It also contains about 2 to 5% of fats. Fibre which is required in our diet for maintaining digestion, body weight etc. is also present in amount about 2 to 5%. Millets are a rich source of various phytochemicals including tannins, phenolic acids, anthocyanins, phytosterols and pinacosanols. These phytochemicals have potential positive impact on human health. Here, the major phytochemicals are phenolic compounds. Phenolic compounds are secondary metabolites of plants responsible for colour, nutritional and anti-oxidant properties.

Health Benefits of Millets

Millets are a nutritious food that provides many health benefits, including boosting the immune system. Including millets in the diet can help enhance the body's ability to fight infections and diseases and promote overall good health and immunity. Millets are one of the rich sources of niacin thus has potential to help the CVD patients. Moreover, they are also rich in phytochemicals like phytic acid that helps in lowering cholesterol which is also associated with lowering the risk of cardiovascular diseases. Further, fibre plays a significant

role in glycemic control as millets are rich in dietary fibre and several minerals that help in controlling diabetes.

The small grains collectively called as Millets are the rich source of micronutrients and their role in brain health is note worthy. Millets contains phenolics which are effective for the prevention of the cancer initiation and progression. Millets contains linolic acid which helps in preventing tumor. Prebiotics and Probiotics also fibres present in millets help in improving the digestion, sometimes absorption and thus overall improvement in our gut health.

Objectives of this study were:

1. To study the awareness among young adults regarding their knowledge about nutritional benefits of millets.
2. To study the awareness among young adults regarding their knowledge about health benefits of millets.
3. To know about the consumption of millets among young adults.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted using survey research methodology. Here survey methodology was used because the main purpose of this study is to know awareness among young adults regarding this topic. The sample or sampling frame of this study were young adults of age 20 to 30 years old residing within India. The data of about 100 samples were taken according to the convenience of the researcher. The tool used for the purpose of collecting data was 'Questionnaire. Data was collected using Google forms which had approximately 20 to 25 questions. It mainly had closed ended question but there was still choice to add other self experiences and data. All answers of the respective questions were expected to be on the basis of participants' knowledge, personal views and/or recent experiences.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed on the percentage basis for all the questions using MS excel.

The survey included young adults both males and females, in this survey all types of population were include those who were working as well as those who were students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The participants of this study were from within different states of India - Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka. This research was conducted for knowing the awareness of young adults of age 20 to 30 years old. The young adults who participated in the survey belong to different profiles it included students, people doing service jobs or are doing other professions. First the questions were regarding the general knowledge including the purchase and consumption of millets among the young adults followed by questions on their knowledge, views and awareness about the nutritive content of millets and the health benefits they might provide.

The survey was focused on young adults as there is increase in health and nutritional related problems in recent years so to prevent such problems in future one of the way is to maintain health by eating nutritious food such as millets, millets have many nutritional and health benefits, from the agriculture point of view it is easy to grow in India and are cheap. Keeping in mind such benefits there is a greater need to promote consumption of millets, though now a day's government is putting efforts on this but the newer generation is less aware about them as they are more tilted towards the junk food due to their busy and spontaneous life.

It was found that Most of the young adults (90.0%) knew about millets. Young adults include variety of millets in their diet mostly they consume Bajra (Pearl millet) 37.0%, followed by Jowar (Sorghum) 31.0% and Ragi (Finger millet) 21.0% about 02.0% of them includes corn in their diet whereas only 09.0% of them included all types of millet in their diet. In young adults most of them purchase millets every 2-3 month (58.0%) while only 19.0% of them purchase millets every month and 23.0% purchase them once a year. Most of the young adults either consume millets once in a few months or every 15 day (40.0%) and only 06.0% consume them on daily basis whereas 14.0% of them consume millets twice a week. Nearly all of the young adults (97.0%) knew that millets are good source of protein. Most of them (95.0%) knew that millets are good source of micronutrients. The majority of them (94.0%) knew that millets are good source of fibre. A large number (73.0%) of young adults knew that millets are good source of Phytochemicals Majority of young adults (89.0%) knew that millets are good for heart health. Most of the young adults (81.0%) knew that millets help in maintaining mental health. A large number (73.0%) of them knew that millets help in reducing

the risk of cancer. Most of the young adults (87.0%) knew that millets are good for gut health.

CONCLUSION

Young adults are the present as well as the future of our country their health is beneficial for current development as well as the future development of our country. Keeping in mind these points this study was conducted which aims at knowing and studying the general awareness of young adults on the millets that they know the locally grown and nutritionally healthy food variety which they can add in their diet for the purpose of meeting their health and nutritional needs.

From this study we can understand that young adults are aware about the nutritive benefits of millets though they are bit less aware about the overall health benefits of the millets as compared to nutritive benefits but they still not consume the millets in their diet as much. Thus there is need to increase the focus on making people aware about the benefits of millets but there should be more focus required to promote the consumption of millets among young adults.

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