Examining staff and students perception on daily fruit and vegetable recommendation at Umm Al-Qura University

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Introduction: There is a lack in the awareness in the fruit and vegetable (F&V) recommendation among Saudi society. Although the known facts of the benefits of F&V on health, information on Saudi society following the advised recommendation whether by WHO or local is still unknown.

Aim: This cross- sectional study aim to examine the perception of F&V intake among students and staff at Umm Al-Qura University and to assess if they follow these recommendations of F&V locally and internationally.

Method: Students and staff from Umm Al-Qura University participated in this study (n= 98, age between 18- 55). All data were collected using short online survey via Online survey - Survey Monkey in 2019.

Result: 55% students and staff were not aware about these recommendations whereas 45% were aware about WHO recommendation. The majority of students and staff 53% have less than two portions a day of F&V. Only 14% have between two to four portions a day. 32% do not eat any portion of F&V daily. 59%, 14%, 5% of students and staff who believe that they should have five, seven, more than seven portions a day for being healthy respectively. Maintaining health, reduce the risk for chronic disease and providing essential vitamins and minerals to the body were all reasons why students and staff believe that they should have F&V everyday by 71%. Busy lifestyle, F&V cost, lack of the awareness about the health benefits, dislike the taste, some F&V spoil easily were all factors affecting eating F&V daily.

Conclusion: People need educational and nutritional campaigns to spread the awareness about the health benefits of F&V. Most importantly the ministry of health should support those campaigns to increase people awareness and build a healthy society with a good habit.

Keywords: Fruit intake, veg intake, F&V recommendation, students, staff, Umm Al-Qura University.

Biography

Dr. Heba Althubaiti studied Human Nutrition at Aberdeen University, Scotland and graduated in Apr 2018, I got my MSC in Nutrition and food science in Nov 2011 from Heriot Watt University, Scotland. I work as Assistant Professor in Umm Al-Qura University, Saudi Arabia. During my PhD I joined the Energetic Group of Prof John Speakman in Aberdeen University (School of biological Science). I have presented two studies during my PhD in two conferences which held by Nutrition Society. I have published 4 research articles and working on my current project which discuss Saudi students and the academic Staff about their perception on snack preferences and healthiness.