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Fruit and vegetable's consumption among children and adolescents: Trends, determinants of consumption and possible solutions

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Nutritional health during childhood and adolescence is important to support the growing body and to prevent the future health problems. Fruits and vegetables are important components of a healthy diet. Their consumption varies considerably among and within countries. Large proportions of children do not fulfil the World Health Organization recommendation of eating fruit and vegetables per day. Reduced fruit and vegetables' consumption is linked to poor health, constipation and increased risk of noncommunicable diseases including cancer. The dietary fibre available in the outer skin of these foods could help to lower blood pressure, and together with phytochemicals such as plant sterols, flavonoids and other antioxidants found in fruits and vegetables which may be important in modulating cholesterol and other biological processes. In addition, obesity and overweight among this age group is being linked to low intake of fruits and vegetables. The determinants for high consumption levels of fruits and vegetables are found to be related to female gender, low age, high socioeconomic status, high preferences for fruit and vegetables, large parental intake of fruit and vegetables and high availability/accessibility of fruit and vegetables at home as well as peer influence. Possible solutions to improve fruit and vegetables' consumption include behavioural interventions and improvements in agricultural and food systems. Results from Sudan and Saudi Arabia will be discussed.

Biography

Ahlam Badreldin El Shikieri has completed her PhD from Queen Margaret University, and has an MBA from Leicester University, UK. She is a registered Consultant Nutritionist, a Certified Public Health Nutritionist and an Associate Professor currently working in Saudi Arabia. She acted as an invited speaker at several workshops and conferences in Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Spain and Taiwan. She supervised several research projects for students both at Master and PhD levels and acted as an external examiner for postgraduate thesis in several universities. She taught nutrition, research and management related modules at the graduate and undergraduate levels. She designed pamphlets for patients with diabetes mellitus, obesity and cancer. She undertook several researches focusing on assessing the nutritional status of cancer patients, children, malnourished hospitalized patients and many others related to public health nutrition. She is a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, British Nutrition Society, World Public Health Nutrition Association and others. She is a reviewer for various journals including the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* and has acted as an author for more than 15 published research papers and newsletter articles.

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