



ISSN (E): 2277- 7695  
ISSN (P): 2349-8242  
NAAS Rating: 5.03  
TPI 2019; 8(4): 73-75  
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www.thepharmajournal.com  
Received: 11-02-2019  
Accepted: 15-03-2019

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## A preliminary study on fast food consumption pattern and preferences among school going children in Bareilly city

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### Abstract

Dietary habits are one of the modifiable risk factors for nutrition related health problems during school aged children. Fast food culture is an emerging trend among school going children. It is very convenient and tasty and peer pressure make them popular with children. But to know how students are attracted by fast foods has assumed importance in recent times. The objective of this study to know about fast food consumption pattern and preferences among school going children in Bareilly city. The study was carried out by using self designed and pretested questionnaire in this study. Appropriate statistical analysis was used to draw meaningful results from the collected raw data. The result found that the preferences of fast indicates that majority (85.25%) of children are more like to prefer consumption of fast food, whereas 14.75 percent respondents do not prefer to consume fast food. The percentage of fast food consumption pattern of school going children shows that 22.5 percent children ate pizza once a week, 16.25 percent children consume pasta 2-3 times in a week, 27 percent respondents consume maggi 2-3 times in a week, whereas only 12.5 percent children ate wraps once a week, 11.75 percent respondents ate wafers once a week, 17 percent students consume cookies 2-3 times in a week, 31.5 percent children consume doughnuts not very often. Fast foods have high level of fats and sugars that are not only unhealthy but addictive and that creates a viscous cycle making it hard for children to choose healthy food.

**Keywords:** dietary habits, statistical analysis, addictive, viscous cycle

### Introduction

Good health is an important indicator of the quality of life and refers to broader human environment, in which healthy nutrition takes an important place. Nutrition is the basic human need and prerequisite for healthy life. A proper diet is essential from the very early stages of life for growth, development and active life (NIN, 2003) [2]. School going children is often associated with increased number of meals taken other than home and increased consumption of fast foods in the form of snacks which may result in health problems associated with nutrition. Fast food denotes food which is prepared and served quickly, it includes chips, sandwiches, burgers, pizza, french fries etc. Fast foods meet the needs of many people because they are quick, reasonably priced and readily available (Vaida, 2013) [6]. On the other hand poor eating habits and physical inactivate. Children set the stage for health problems in adulthood. Children are surrounded by many things that make it easy to overeat and harder to be active. Foods that are high in fat and sugar content often come in large portion sizes (Singh and Mishra, 2014) [5].

WHO identifies adolescence as the period in human growth and development that occur after childhood and before adulthood from ages 10 to 19 years. Healthy eating behaviour during adolescence is a fundamental prerequisite for physical growth, psychosocial development and cognitive performance as well as for the preventive of diet related chronic diseases in adulthood (Sarkar, 2015) [3]. In today's scenario, fast food industry is getting adapted of Indian food requirement and growing in India. It is gaining acceptance primarily from Indian youth and younger generation and is becoming part of life. Indian habits and changing preferences towards fast food consumption. Fast food is one of the world's forest growing food types fast foods are quick, reasonable and easily available alternatives to home cooked food. Fast food are typically high in calories, saturated fats, sugar and salt. Fast food is a very fast growing industry in world as well as in India especially in urban areas (small and large cities) (Goyal and Singh, 2007) [1].

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**Objectives of the study**

1. To study the fast food consumption pattern among school going children.
2. To find out fast food preferences among school going children.

**Materials and Methods**

Present study was conducted in the government and private schools of Bareilly city. Total 400 school going children were selected randomly. A total of 400 students were selected from the eight school of Bareilly city between the age group of 10 - 15 years. The schedule was used to collect the information on fast food frequency questionnaire and fast food preferences among school going children. The pre-structured questionnaire was developed. The frequency of fast food consumption was recorded in terms of intake of pizza, burger, ice-cream, cookies/cakes, pasta, maggi etc. The information of frequency of fast food consumption questionnaire in terms of favourite, 4-5 times in a week, 3-4 times in a week, once in a week, not very often was collected.

**Results and Discussion**

In the study majority (63.5%) students belonged to 13-15 years of age group. Boys were 64 percent and girls were 36 percent. Around 27.5 percent respondents belonged to upper middle class and 14.75 percent respondents were from low income group. 33 percent students received no pocket money whereas 67 percent received pocket money. The data were analyzed and presented in term of frequency and percentage.

**Table 1:** Distribution of the respondent on the basis of fast food preferences.

S. No.	Preference to consume fast food item	School going children (10-15 year)	
		N	%
1.	Yes	341	85.25
2.	No	59	14.75
	Total	400	100

Table 1 shows the preference of fast food among school going children aged 10-15 year. It indicates that majority (85.25%) of children are more like to eat fast food, whereas 14.75 percent respondents do not prefer to consume fast food because they are health conscious. Children are surrounded by many things that make easy to choose different types of fast food which they like to eat. Children prefer foods that are high in fat and sugar content often come in large portion sizes. TV commercials, banners and other screen aids can also lead

**Table 3:** Distribution of fast food consumption pattern according to food items.

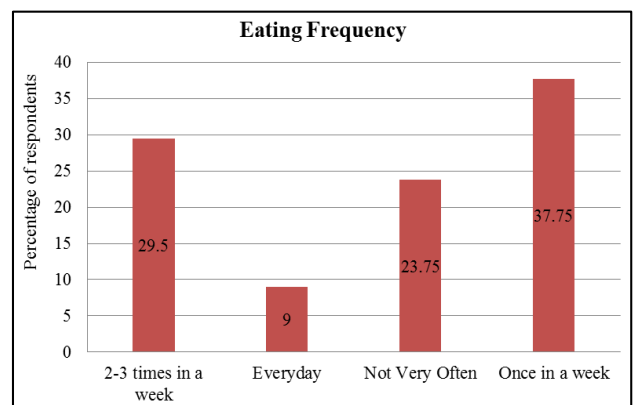
Fast Food Items	Favourite		4-5 times in a week		3-4 times in a week		2-3 times in a week		Once a week		Not Very Often	
	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age
Pizza	119	29.75	16	4	6	1.5	38	9.5	90	22.5	175	43.75
Burger	94	23.5	13	3.25	15	3.75	56	14	98	24.5	132	33
Noodles	102	25.5	15	3.75	26	6.5	69	17.25	109	27.25	97	24.25
Sandwich	78	19.5	12	3	36	9	63	15.75	104	26	79	19.75
Hot Dogs	27	6.75	3	0.75	6	1.5	20	5	58	14.5	152	38
French Fries	49	12.25	8	2	20	5	23	5.75	81	20.25	117	29.25
Pasta	103	25.75	16	4	16	4	65	16.25	108	27	96	24
Maggi	173	43.25	31	7.75	27	6.75	108	27	116	29	72	18
Wraps	20	5	10	2.5	7	1.75	16	4	50	12.5	130	32.5
Wafers	32	8	10	2.5	13	3.25	30	7.5	47	11.75	118	29.5
Cookies	91	22.75	38	9.5	33	8.25	68	17	59	14.75	81	20.25
Doughnuts	19	4.75	6	1.5	7	1.75	15	3.75	39	9.75	126	31.5
Pastries/Cakes	88	22	9	2.25	14	3.5	29	7.25	90	22.5	126	31.5
Icecream	127	31.75	8	2	24	6	89	22.25	86	21.5	111	27.75

to unhealthy food choices.

**Table 2:** Distribution of the respondents of frequency of eating fast foods

Sr. No	Frequency of eating	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
1	Every day	36	9
2	2-3 times in a week	118	29.5
3	Once in a week	151	37.75
4	Not very often	95	23.75

Frequency distribution presented in Table 2 and figure 1 evident that going for snacks is most preferred time for visiting fast foods outlet. It was observed from the table that 37.75 percent respondents were consumed fast foods once in a week. Out of total 29.5 percent of them were consumed fast foods not on regular basis but they like to eat for about 2 to 3 times in a week, 23.75 percent children were consumed fast food not very often so they consumed it on monthly basis and rest 9 percent of respondents were consumed fast food on regular basis children consumed regularly after school and in the evening with their friends they also go to coaching regularly and they eat there or after coaching.



**Fig 1:** Distribution of the respondents of frequency of eating fast foods

These findings are similar to those of a study done by Steyn and Marais (2010) in South Africa showing that 11 percent of the participants ate fast food daily, 27.6 percent ate two to three times a week and 20.8 percent ate fast food at least once a week. Only 3.8 percent of the participants had fast food less than once per month.

Table 3 shows that the percentage of fast food consumption pattern using by school going children. 22.5 percent children ate pizza once a week, 24.5 percent students consume burger once in a week, 27.25 percent respondents ate noodles once a week, most of children (26%) consume sandwich once per week, only 14.5 percent students ate hot dogs once a week, 20.25 percent respondents consume French fries once a week, 16.25 percent children consume pasta 2-3 times in a week, 27 percent respondents consume maggi 2-3 times in a week, whereas only 12.5 percent children ate wraps once a week, 11.75 percent respondents ate wafers once a week, 17 percent students consume cookies 2-3 times in a week, 31.5 percent children consume doughnuts not very often, 22.5 percent children consume pastries and cakes once a week and 22.25 percent respondents consume ice-cream 2-3 times in a week. It shows that young consumers in Bareilly city are the beginning stage of fast food culture as part of their lifestyle and there is a lot of potential for fast food industry to grow in the upcoming years.

Fast foods have high level of fats and sugars that are not only unhealthy but addictive and that creates a vicious cycle making it hard for children to choose healthy food. Fast food is convenient and tasty though it prepared with low nourishing or unhealthy ingredients. Children with busy schedule mostly consume fast food because they are quickly available. Teenagers are spent their money on fast food vigorously. Fast food is a major cause of avoiding healthy food items.

### Conclusion

Fast food habits of school going children are influenced by many factors such as environment at home, educational environment, availability and accessibility to fast food providers and social surroundings. Fast food lovers consumed more fats, sugars and carbohydrates and fewer fruits and non-starchy vegetables than youngsters who did not eat fast food. Currently school going children levels of consuming fast food probably are even higher because of their preferences and also increased number of fast food restaurants and in fast food marketing since last few years. This study found that majority of respondents were like to eat fast food so the school going children give more preferences for fast food.

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