



10. EVALUATION OF THE CONSUMPTION OF FOOD PRODUCTS CONTAINING SUGAR AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

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Introduction. Sugar consumption among young people is a major public health problem with long-term negative health effects. The World Health Organization recommends that added sugar intake should not exceed 10% of total caloric intake. However, studies show that young people consume on average is twice as much sugar as is recommended.

Aim of study. Assessment of dietary habits and awareness of sugar consumption among young people.

Methods and materials. A survey was conducted in which 159 people between the ages of 18 and 30 participated, from urban (74.8%) and rural (25.2%) localities of the Republic of Moldova. Male respondents – 17.6%, female – 82.4%.

Results. The daily consumption of food products with a high sugar content was reported by 52.2% respondents, 35.8% – 2-3 times a week, 12% – once a week. The main sources of sugar in the diet were: fruits (81.1%), sweets (78.6%), pastries (66.7%), soft drinks (22.6%). Factors that influenced the decision to buy low-sugar food products: personal health (59.1%), taste (56.6%), recommendations from friends or family (27%), advertising and promotion (19.5%), price (14.5%). Young people reported that they are aware of the sugar content of food products in 51.6% of cases, moderately aware – 47.2% and young people who are not aware of the problem – 1.2%. 39.6% respondents have a lot of knowledge about the effects of excessive sugar consumption on health, moderate knowledge - 54.7%, little knowledge - 5.7%. The most information about the impact of sugar on the health of young people was received from school / university (73.6%), mass media (72.3%), doctor (28.3%). Young people reported that it is important to be given more information about the risks of excessive sugar consumption: yes – 89.3%, no – 8.2%, sometimes – 2.5%. Thus, young people are aware of the risks associated with excessive sugar consumption, but are still prone to consuming foods high in sugar. This is partly because soft drinks, sweets and pastries, which are major sources of sugar, are accessible, cheap and tasty. To reduce sugar consumption among young people, it is important to combine several strategies, including: (1) Awareness campaigns. (2) Education in schools. (3) Access to healthy alternatives. These strategies could help reduce sugar consumption among young people and improve their long-term health.

Conclusion. Excessive sugar consumption among young people is a complex problem with serious health consequences. Awareness campaigns should inform young people about the risks associated with excessive sugar consumption and motivate them to make healthy food choices. Youth education programs should include information on nutrition, the negative effects of excessive sugar consumption, and ways to adopt a healthy lifestyle.