



DIET BEHAVIOR IN ADOLESCENT GIRLS, FACTORS AND CONSEQUENCES OF NON COMPLIANCE

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Introduction. Adolescence is one of the most critical periods of life, in which physiological, sexual, neurological and behavioral changes take place. Since it is a period of rapid growth, an adequate nutrition is crucial for a full development of both physical and mental, as well to avoid some health problems in future. The need to analyze diet behavior at teen girls it's justified by following: future adult health, passing food practices to the next generation and of course avoiding diet-related health problems that can lead to decreased work capacity. Canadian, Australian, American and British cross-sectional data suggest similar high rates of attempted weight loss among adolescents (S. Findlay 2004). In another Canadian study it was found that, by the age of 18 years, 80% of girls of normal height and weight reported that they would like to weigh less (J.M Jones 2001). In Republic of Moldova current problem is not sufficiently studied, there are only a few recommendations about nutrition of adolescents and some vague studies.

Material and methods. The method used for the study is retrospective descriptive epidemiological investigation. The data collection took place through the review of studies and scientific articles on specialized sites such as Research Gate, PubMed etc. and by questioning the target group through the Google Forms platform. The questionnaire consists of 4 compartments and includes general data, teen's diet behaviors, some motivating factors and consequences for health. The study involved 100 girls aged 12-18 (average age – 15,7 years) from the Republic of Moldova and without chronic diseases or diagnosed eating disorders.

Results. A teenager's diet should include five main meals every day: breakfast, lunch, dinner and two snacks. It must also include all five important food groups. Only 21% of girls have all 5 meals every day, 26% have 4 meals, except one snack and 15% have only 3 basic meals. When asked about missing one of the meals only 32% answered that they never miss the breakfast, 36% never miss the lunch and only 36% said that they always eat dinner. The main products included in daily diet are: vegetables, cereals, meat or fish, but girls said they also consume various bakery products, cakes, processed products. Also, 75% said they eat fast food 1-2 times a week. There are 4 groups of factors correlates of dieting and unhealthy weight control behaviors in teenagers: individual, family, environmental and other factors. Also we can add media and social networks. I asked some questions from BSQ-34, and we can notice that only 22% of girls never thought about dieting and 10% always think about this. 13 girls have ever induced vomiting, 9 used laxatives and 47% resorted to exaggerate physical activity ever. According to the body mass index-for-age percentiles, 80% of girls have normal weight.

Conclusions. The diet behavior of girls is inappropriate, they eat unhealthy products, skip the meals and don't respect mealtimes. One of the most important factors that determine unhealthy diet behaviors are body image distortion and influence of social media. Consequences of unhealthy diet include growth retardation, delayed sexual maturation, decreased intellectual capacity or even eating disorders.