



Impact of Excessive Watching Television on Health and Nutritional Status among Suburban Children

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Abstract

The growing children age is crucial to the development of child's body, brain, in respect of educational and psychological development. Their negative influences can have lifelong health effects. Excessive television viewing among young children has been linked to negative impacts on early child brain development and life-long physical health. On the other hand, repeated exposure to television can affect a child's mental and emotional development that often takes place of interactive experiences (for eg. play) that promotes healthy brain development. Increased exposure to advertisements for high fat and sugar containing food leading to poor food choices. It was established that on an average approximate 20,000 commercials in each year a child is viewing. It was many times hypothesized that increased television viewing during meals is associated with an increased consumption of food high in fat and sugar and a decreased consumption of fruits, vegetables and milk that affecting child's health and nutritional status. It was also hypothesized many times that television viewing is associated with increased consumption of snacks that have negative impact on health and nutrition on children. The main objectives of the paper to find status of excessive watching television impact on health and nutrition among children of suburban town. The paper was prepared at Deva Sub-urban town of Barabanki district state Uttar Pradesh (India). A-100 families purposively selected that having the children 3-12 years of age. Their recorded views in face to face situation through interview schedule method. The parameter used RDA and RDI, weight and height etc. The main findings of the paper were; the most-liked TV programme; 39% cartoon film followed by 34% film show, 10% educational programme, 9% social serials, 5% others and least 3% news. The time spent on programmes was approx. 8 hours-39%, 6 hours-23%, 4 hours 14%, and 2 hours and less than two hours: 24%. The obesity status- 38% overweight or obese; 42% healthy and rest 20% underweight. The intake of snacks and meal during watching TV was observed among 62% subjects not taking healthy food, only 38% subjects intake healthy food. The liking of food; fast and junk food; 68%, milk 10% and rest 22% other food items. Therefore, it was observed that approx. 68% subjects were found unbalanced and unhealthy nutritional status that were watching excessive television programmes.

Keywords: Television, health and nutritional status, physical and mental health.

Introduction

There is a strong correlation between excessive intake of food and the amount of time per day spent watching television¹. Television viewing is the third most time-consuming activity following work (study) and sleep among children. A typical child in the United States watches approximately 20 hours of television per week². In 2000, the National Task Force on Prevention and Treatment of Obesity reported that 64% of the American Population is overweight or obese³. This is a primary health concern since obesity is associated with and increased risk for a number of diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, certain cancers and cardiovascular diseases, and contributes to over 4,00,000 death annually in the United States⁴. According to Jenna Maraya pilot study conclusion realised need for continued investigation to understand the relationship between television viewing and food consumption, since study results revealed that subjects had an impaired ability to accurately estimate total food

consumption while viewing television⁵. Blass et.al. studies whether the amount of food eaten while watching a 30 minute television show would exceed the amount of food consumed while listening to classical music. The food used were high density, familiar food such as macaroni and cheese and pizza. They found that the time between slices of pizza was shorter during television viewing, and the macaroni and cheese was eaten at a faster rate and for a longer period of time. Overall Caloric intake increased to 71% while watching television. They concluded that television viewing contributes to an increased intake of high density, palatable foods⁶. According to the Healthy people 2010 report, childhood obesity attributable to unhealthy diet is increasing in prevalence World Wide. The centre for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization have labelled this increase an epidemic⁷. High fat high sugar, and low fibre foods are frequently advertised on television especially on children's television⁸. Research on the effects of television viewing suggest that food portrayals affect

children's understanding of nutrition, their choice of types and amounts of foods to eat and even their ability to resist temptation when presented with low nutrition treats. Research points to the poor nutritional status of foods advertised during television programmes viewed by children even quantifying this status in terms of the USDA Food Guide Pyramid, however, a decade after the introduction of the Nutrition Facts label, no study has specially, quantified the nutritional profits on television- advertised foods in terms of this label. Given that the label is both understood and used by consumers when shopping for family food products. The dietary patterns of children form families in which television viewing is a normal part of meal routines may include fewer fruits and vegetables and more pizzas, snack foods, and sodas than the dietary patterns of children from families in which television viewing and eating are separate activities⁹. The studies of the relationship of television to children's diet have examined the content of nutrition message on television and behaviour links between television and children's food consumption patterns. These later studies have documented a positive correlation among the number of hours of television viewed by children, their requests for and consumption of advertised foods, and the willingness of parents to purchase food request their children. Although the number of weekly meals eaten with television on has been documented, association between television and children's overall food consumption patterns have never been examined¹⁰. Children food choices are shaped by individual, societal and cultural factors. Some are endogenous to the individual child, but others are environmental. These include the food made available to children inside and outside the home and the modelling of food behaviours by caregivers, especially parents¹¹. Television is the largest single media source of messages about food. The vast majority of money spent on food advertising comes from branded food manufacturers and fast food chains, and television is primary medium used by these companies. The food products advertised most intensively on television also tend to be over consumed relative to federal dietary guidelines, whereas fruits and vegetables which are almost never advertised are under consumed. It is, therefore, of considerable importance to determine the relationship between use of television and children food consumption patterns¹². One of the most sedentary behaviours 'per se' in childhood is television viewing. This behaviour could replace more vigorous activities, and at the same time, could expose children to a large number of important unhealthy stimulations in terms of food intake¹³. First of all, it has been recognized, that in the last few decades, obesity prevalence has increased as a function of the number of hours that TV networks devotes to target children populations¹⁴. TV shows and cartoon programmes addressed to a very young audience are now aired every day on both public/nation-wide and private/commercial channels¹⁵. Most of the times the new way of approaching children with dedicated programmes is sponsored by companies producing toys and for unhealthy food, including high calories, high sugar and high-salt products¹⁶. The negative consequences of the commercials

The higher the number of commercials watched the greater the number of purchase-influencing attempts directed at parents in the supermarket by children from 3 to 11 years of age¹⁷. T.V. on during meals, worse eating pattern in the family. T.V. off during meals. Higher intake of fruits, vegetables etc. in children from 8 to 11 years of age¹⁸. Adolescents frequently eating fast food need to watch more television than their peers¹⁹. Among all the types of commercials, food advertising is the most frequent, especially when it comes to junk food in all of its forms; high fat, high sugar, high salt foods, sodas and sugared beverages, and of course, advertising for fast food restaurant and more recently, ready-to-eat frozen food, which is often nutritionally unbalanced.

Promotion of Poor dietary habits: The average child views about 20,000 commercials each year. Sugary cereals are strongly marketed to children; making up 34% of all commercials during children programming. Children often ask for these food by name and parents buy them. Children with a television in their bedroom snack more than children without. Increased exposure to advertisements for high fat and sugar containing food leading to poor food choices. It was established that on an average approx. 20,000 commercials in each year a child is viewing. It was many times hypothesized that increased television viewing during meals is associated with an increased consumption of food high in fat and sugar and a decreased consumption of fruits, vegetables and milk that affecting child health and nutritional status. It was also hypothesized many times that television viewing is associated with increased consumption of snacks that have negative impact on health and nutrition on children.

Objectives: The main objectives of the paper to find out status of excessive watching television impact on health and nutrition among children of sub-urban town.

Methodology

Study area: Deva Town of Barabanki district of state Uttar Pradesh; India.

Sample size: Approx. all the families that having children of age group 3-12 years purposively selected and a 100 families were selected for the purpose of paper.

Tools: An interview schedule method used to record their opinion in face-to-face situation.

Parameter: RDA∞RDI, weight and height, etc.

Design: Exploratory cum explanatory research design was used.

Analysis of date: The collected data were tabulated and analysed in accordance with the statistical and scientific method.

Conclusion

Age-wise distribution of Subject; 3-6years; 21%, 6-9 years 36% and rest 9-12 years 43%. Sex of the subjects; male; 68% and female; 32%. Religion; 62%, Hindus; 28%, Muslims and 10% other such as Sikhs and Christians. Caste wise distribution; a 28% upper caste, 16% other backward caste and 56% SC/ST

Academic status: 57 per cent subjects attaining educational level up to 5th class, and rest 43 per cent attained 5-8class education. The families economic status 21 per cent having their family income up to Rs. 15000 to 30000, 32% having their Income level 30000 to 50000 and rest 29% having their income level Rs. 50000 and above.

Obesity Status: Under weight ; 20%, 42%; healthy and rest 38 per cent over weight and above. Nutritional Status; on the basis of RDA∞RDI; a 7 per cent of first order i.e. much lower to requirement order nutritional status, 18 per cent second order is below to requirement order, 22% requirement order, fourth order i.e. above to requirement order; 18% and rest 35% of fifth order i.e. much above to requirement order.

The most like T.V. Programmes - 39% Cartoon films , 34% Film show , 10% Educational programmes, 9% Social Serials, 5% others, 3% news.

The time spent on watching T.V.: Approx. 8.0 hours 39% , Approx. 6.0 hours 23%, Approx. 4.0 hours 14% , Approx. 2.0 hours and less than 100 hours 24%

The intake of meal and snacks during watching T.V. was observed among 62% subjects that were not taking healthy foods. On the other hand only 38 per cent subjects were taking healthy foods. The 55% subjects were observed their nutritional status above to requirement order and among them 38 per cent overweight or obese that were observed a correlation with 62% subjects watching television and taking meal or snacks those were unhealthy foods. That were supported by many study those were given in the introduction of this paper. The liking of foods ingredients such as fast and junk food 68% subjects, 10% milk and 22% other food items. Therefore, it was observed with a healthy support approx. 68% subjects were found intakes unbalanced, unhealthy nutritional status that were watching excessive television programmes.

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