

Dietary Intake and Nutritional Status of Adolescents

RMDJ Rathnayaka¹, SBWD Premasiri¹, KADL Bhagya^{2#}, GNN Wayidyarathna³, and
LAMHP Udayakumari¹

¹University of Vocational Technology, Sri Lanka

²University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

³General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka

#lakminikalugampitiya@gmail.com

Adolescents' dietary habits significantly impact long-term health outcomes as proper nutrition is crucial for growth, brain development and overall health. An increased consumption of processed food with reduced fruit, vegetables and whole grains have become an emerging issue among adolescents. This study aimed to assess the dietary intake of 15 to 16-year-old school children in Okkampitiya village, Monaragala district, Sri Lanka. A seven-day diet diary method was employed, where 95 participants completed a structured data sheet detailing their daily food consumption with the portion sizes for seven consecutive days. An initial training and expertise assistance was given for the participants on completing the diet diaries. Data were categorized based on Sri Lankan food-based dietary guidelines. The average number of daily servings of the study group was estimated for each food group. Preliminary analysis indicated an average number of daily servings for respective food groups; cereal and starchy food, legume and pulses, fruit, vegetable, fish, egg, lean meat and milk and dairy products as 12.2, 0.5, 0.4, 1.6, 1.3, 0.6. Sugar and sweets, as well as oily nuts, fats and oils were reported infrequently. These findings indicate an average cereal and starchy food intake of the study group within the recommended number of servings per day while legumes and pulses, fruit, vegetable, fish, egg and lean meat consumption were lower than the recommendations. This emphasizes the potential imbalances in nutrient intake and the need for dietary interventions to promote healthier eating habits among adolescents in the region.

Keywords: *adolescents, diet diary, serving size*