

Impact of nutrition education on dietary behaviour and the hemoglobin status of the rural adolescent girls

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The present study was undertaken to assess the impact of nutrition education on the dietary behaviour and the haemoglobin status of the rural adolescent girls. The study was conducted on the 60 (sixty) anaemic rural adolescent girls aged between 13-16 years studying in the rural government senior secondary schools of Moga district of Punjab state. A pre-tested interview schedule was used to collect the relevant information. Part I of the interview schedule comprised questions regarding general information on type of family, family size, occupation, age, educational level and income of the family. Part II of the interview schedule comprised questions regarding the dietary pattern and general health and hygiene practices followed by the adolescents. Nutritional status of the adolescent girls was assessed by anthropometric parameters (Height and weight), clinical examinations, hemoglobin status and dietary survey. After collecting the above said pre-requisite information, the sample (n=60) was further divided into two groups namely intervention and control group (n=30). For the experimental group, nutrition education intervention was given fortnightly for a period of three months. The nutrition education strategy was aimed at motivating adolescent girls to understand their nutritional vulnerability and to improve their diets to benefit their health and well being. The control group was not exposed to any formal nutrition education. After the three months intervention programme, part-II of the interview schedule was again administered to collect the relevant information. Nutritional status of the both intervention and control groups was also assessed. Data collected was analyzed by applying frequency, percentages, Chi-square and t-test. The results revealed that the nutrition education intervention proved to be successful in changing the attitude and dietary behaviour of the rural girls. Significant improvement was observed in the dietary pattern of the girls. Significant increase in weight gain (2.4 kg) was observed in the intervention group. A marked increase in the height and haemoglobin of the intervention group was also observed but was statistically non-significant. However, the change was towards the increasing trend. Hence, from the study it could be concluded that nutrition education is one of the appropriate effective and sustainable approach to combat iron deficiency anaemia.

Key Words : Adolescents, Nutrition education, Hemoglobin, Dietary behaviour

How to cite this article : Kaur, Parminder (2015). Impact of nutrition education on dietary behavior and the hemoglobin status of the rural adolescent girls. *Food Sci. Res. J.*, 6(1): 102-107.

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