

PERSPECTIVES, KNOWLEDGE AND CONSUMPTION FREQUENCY OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FOR FUNCTIONAL AND LIGHT FOODS

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Abstract

Objective: In recent years, the emphasis in the health arena of the international food and drinks market has primarily been focused on functional light foods and drinks. The aim of the study was to determine the knowledge and attitudes of university students for the functional and light foods and products.

Method: This study was carried out by applying questionnaire method among total 280 students of 140 whom were men and the rest was women selected by using random sampling method of continuing education in Vocational Education Faculty between 1st-28th of February. The questionnaire formed by researchers includes questions intended to find the demographic properties, nutrition habits and consumption habits of functional and light products. The positive effects of functional foods and light products on health were assessed using the 5-item Likert scale that included 7 statements (1:totally disagree,.....,5=totally agree). A reliability study of the Likert scale used was done and Cronbach's α was found as 0.9285. Weights and heights were taken and body mass indexes (BMI) were calculated. Statistical analysis was performed by using SPSS 13.0 version for windows. The results were evaluated with 95% confidence level and the significance at $p < 0.05$ level.

Results: The average length of male students was determined as ($\bar{x} \pm Sx$) $176 \pm 6,82$ cm, and that of female students was determined as $164 \pm 6,07$ cm. the average weight of men was found as $71,74 \pm 10,24$ kg and that of women as $56,53 \pm 7,22$ kg. BKI of most of the students (80,7%) was $20,0-24,9$ kg/m^2 which was within the limits of ideal weight ($p < 0,05$). The monthly expense of 50,4% of the students was found as = 212 €. 87,1% of the students have no health problems and 68,9% of them know that grape seed, pomegranate sour, kefir, linen seed, probiotic-prebiotic milk products have functional effect while 31% of them do not know. The answer of 44.2% of male and 55.8% of female students to the question "Which products having functional effect do you prefer, natural or commercial ones?" was the commercial products ($p > 0.005$). The male and female students who consume functional and light commercial products were found to consume everyday low-calorie diet products (3,6%, 6,4%) ($p < 0.05$); linen seed (4,3%, 5%); pomegranate sour (5%, 5%); probiotic-prebiotic milk

products (7,9%, 9,3%); grape seed (2,9%, 6,4%) ($p < 0,05$); kefir (5,7%, 4,3%); calcium – enriched milk (3,6%, 14,3%) ($p < 0,05$); light milk (5,7%, 9,3%); products that arrange the level of cholesterol (6,4%, 2,1%); light cereal products (13,6%, 16,4%) respectively. The attitude of students about the positive effects of functional and light products on health shows meaningful differences between genders in their statements as “they might strengthen the immunity system” ($t_{(278)} = -2,372$, $p < 0,05$) and “they might arrange the level of cholesterol” ($t_{(278)} = -2,105$, $p < 0,05$).

Conclusions: Although most of the students know the positive effects of functional and light products on health, the rate of their daily consumption was found very low. The requirements of the education of university students about functional and light products and presenting accurate information of health and education institutions to the society by various media sources were exhibited. The demand for functional and light products will increase as the motivation intended for adequate and balanced nutrition and life quality in the society increases. The scientific and technological studies about healthy nutrition should not forget the demand of consumers.

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