

Evaluation of University Students' Knowledge and Application of the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) Diet

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet was created to prevent and treat high blood pressure by emphasizing fruit, vegetable, whole grain, low-fat dairy product, and lean protein consumption. Subsequent studies have also established the diet's efficacy in preventing and treating other chronic diseases and for weight management depending on knowledge and adherence.

Objective: The objective of this research is to assess university students' knowledge in regard to DASH diet recommendations via survey in the 2018 fall semester.

Design: In this descriptive study, surveys were administered by the researchers to randomly recruited classes through email and to students in a small southern university. The results from 229 surveys were entered into SPSS version 25 in order to analyze the sample demographics and university students' awareness of DASH diet principles.

Results: For the majority of the survey questions, participants demonstrated no knowledge of the diet recommendations. However, the majority of participants did know that the DASH diet is safe for individuals with no diagnosed chronic disease. 35.8% of all participants claimed to have received formal nutrition education, of which more were given information by a coach or personal trainer than a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN).

Conclusion: The data collected indicates a widespread lack of DASH diet recommendation awareness in university students despite the increasing popularity of healthy living. This finding demonstrates the need for nutrition education provided by an RDN to individuals of this age in particular.