THE DIETARY INTAKE AND LEVELS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Jameskia Thompson, Blessing Dennis, Jung Hye Sung and Jae Eun Lee

School of Health Sciences, College of Public Service, Jackson State University, 350 W. Woodrow Wilson Drive, Jackson, Mississippi, USA

Abstract: Research studies have shown that poor diet and exercise patterns increase the incidence of health disparities such as diabetes and obesity, while proper nutritional dietary intake and physical activity results in positive health outcomes. The authors assessed the diet and exercise habits of college students enrolled in graduate school. Data were collected and analyzed from 35 graduate students who either reside on or off campus, and are unemployed or employed, whether part time or full time. To survey physical activity, they used the Self-Reported Physical Activity scale. They used a food frequency questionnaire (FFQ), similar to the National Health and Nutrition Examination survey (NHANES) which estimates food and nutrient intake. They used exercise and food records based on a week. Participants reported diets that varied with current public health weekly recommendations set up by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for vigorous, moderate physical, flexibility, and endurance activities, fruit/vegetable intake, and dessert; in terms of fruit/vegetable intake, muscular strength and vigorous activities, the study participants fell below these recommendations. The participants met the guidelines for amounts of endurance, moderate physical activity and dessert consumption; however, the average student in this study failed to meet current physical activity and dietary intake recommendations.