

Avoidance of Junk Food during Pregnancy, Lactation and Early Years of Child Life: A Step towards the Prevention of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

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Background:

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder which leads to a myriad of psychiatric and stoical consequences.

Aim:

Analyze the relationship between junk food and soft drinks (JFSDs) consumption of pregnant and lactating mothers and their children and the development of ADHD and related disorders among children.

Methods:

Primary school children in Kohat, Khyber Pukhtonkhuwa Province, Pakistan were surveyed.

Results:

Among 1200 children interviewed, 752 were entered into the analysis. The children's JFSDs intake pattern is as follows: 144 (19 %) mild, in 144 (19 %) moderate, 464 (61.70 %) excessive. The mothers' JFSDs consumption pattern was 181 (14.1%) mild, 209 (27.8%) moderate, 362 (48.1%) excessive. All levels of JFSDs consumption in children were significantly associated with variable degrees of ADHD or the related conditions [χ^2 (df=3)17.5, p 0.0006]. Also, all levels of JFSDs consumption of the mothers were significantly associated with JFSDs in respective children [χ^2 (df=2), 13.948, p 0.0009]. Boys were consistently at greater risk for ADHD and related psychological disorders [χ^2 (df=3), 8.17, p 0.042].

Conclusions:

The frequency of ADHD and related psychological disorders among young children increase with increased JFSDs consumption of the children. Children to mothers used to consuming JFSDs during pregnancy or lactation tend to be JFSDs consumers. Cultural and economic factors could impact the likelihood of ADHD variably between both genders in Pakistani child populations.