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0.490

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Table of Contents

2021



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 5597836 - Research Article

Relationship between Maternal Mood Disorders and Dietary Intake of 3-Year-Olds

Minatsu Kobayashi | Kohei Ogawa | ... | Kevin Y. Urayama

17 Dec 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6188847 - Research Article

Study of the Prevalence of Obesity and Its Association with Maternal and Neonatal Characteristics and Morbidity Profile in a Population of Moroccan Pregnant Women

Fatima Taoudi | Fatima Zahra Laamiri | ... | Amina Barkat

14 Dec 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 5049037 - Research Article

Overweight and Obesity, Body Fat, Waist Circumference, and Anemia in Peruvian University Students: A Cross-Sectional Study

Ruth B. Quiliche Castañeda | Josué Turpo-Chaparro | ... | Percy G. Ruiz Mamani


08 Dec 2021

PDF



Article of the Year Award: Outstanding research contributions of 2021, as selected by our Chief Editors. [Read the winning articles.](#)


Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism

02 Dec 2021	PDF	
-------------	-----	---

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 4119620 - Research Article

Changes in Eating Habits and Lifestyles in a Peruvian Population during Social Isolation for the COVID-19 Pandemic


Salomón Huancahuire-Vega | Edda E. Newball-Noriega | ... | Michael White

01 Dec 2021	PDF	
-------------	-----	---

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 7463391 - Review Article

Effect of Antioxidants in the Treatment of COPD Patients: Scoping Review


Mauricio Orozco-Levi | Claudia Colmenares-Mejía | ... | Norma C. Serrano

24 Nov 2021	PDF	
-------------	-----	---

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 5297162 - Review Article

Therapeutic Effects of *Punica granatum* (Pomegranate): An Updated Review of Clinical Trials

Samira Eghbali | Sayyedah Fatemeh Askari | ... | Amirhossein Sahebkar

16 Nov 2021	PDF	
-------------	-----	---

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 9933319 - Research Article

Serum Uric Acid Is Associated with Metabolic Syndrome and Insulin Resistance among Health Personnel from Peru

Article of the Year Award: Outstanding research contributions of 2021, as selected by our Chief Editors. [Read the winning articles.](#)

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 5513409 - Research Article

Moderate and Severe Level of Food Insecurity Is Associated with High Calorie-Dense Food Consumption of Filipino Households

Imelda Angeles-Agdeppa | Marvin B. Toledo | Jezreel Ann T. Zamora

03 Nov 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6728497 - Research Article

Undernutrition and Associated Factors among Under-Five Orphan Children in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2020: A Cross-Sectional Study

Selam Shegaw Sewnet | Hunegnaw Almwaw Derseh | ... | Netsanet Fentahun

01 Nov 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 1557945 - Research Article

Protective Effect of Fermented Camel Milk Containing *Bifidobacterium longum* BB536 on Blood Lipid Profile in Hypercholesterolemic Rats

Khaled M. El-Zahar | Mohamed F. Y. Hassan | Suliman F. Al-Qaba

29 Oct 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 5712844 - Research Article

Fast-Food Dietary Pattern Is Linked to Higher Prevalence of Metabolic Syndrome in Older Canadian Adults

Zeinab Hosseini | Mehdi Rostami | ... | Hassan Vatanparast

21 Oct 2021

PDF



Article of the Year Award: Outstanding research contributions of 2021, as selected by our Chief Editors. [Read the winning articles.](#)

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism

Wassachew Ashebir Kebede | Belete Yimer Ayele

15 Oct 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 8819846 - Research Article

Concordance of Mother-Child (6–23 Months) Dietary Diversity and Its Associated Factors in Kucha District, Gamo Zone, Southern Ethiopia: A Community-Based Cross-Sectional Study

Tesfaye Guja | Yabsira Melaku | Eshetu Andarge

14 Oct 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 8283471 - Review Article

Nutritional Assessment and Management in Paediatric Chronic Kidney Disease

Jumanah Ziyad Azzouz | Osama Yousef Safdar | ... | Abdulkarim Abbas Jawhari

12 Oct 2021

PDF



First

← 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 →

Last



Author guidelines



Editorial board



Databases and indexing



Sign up for content alerts

Table of Contents

2021



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 5767306 - Research Article

Effect of Third-Generation Beta Blockers on Weight Loss in a Population of Overweight-Obese Subjects in a Controlled Dietary Regimen

Maria Alessandra Gammone | Konstantinos Efthymakis | Nicolantonio D'Orazio

24 Sep 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6630620 - Research Article

Nutritional Status and Associated Factors among Primary Schoolchildren from Pastoral Communities, Mieso-Mulu District, Sitti Zone, Somali Regional State, Eastern Ethiopia: Institution-Based Cross-Sectional Study

Alayou Geletaw | Gudina Egata | ... | Mohammed Semaw

16 Sep 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6469883 - Research Article

Plant-based Diet and Iron Deficiency Anemia in Sundanese Adolescent Girls at Islamic Boarding Schools in Indonesia

Mohammad Zen Rahfiludin | Septo Pawelas Arso | ... | Lilik Hidayanti

13 Sep 2021

PDF



Article of the Year Award: Outstanding research contributions of 2021, as selected by our Chief Editors. [Read the winning articles.](#)

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism

Hala Al-Otaibi | Tahani Al-Sandal | Haiam O. Elkatr

03 Sep 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6757916 - Research Article

Incidence of Diabetic Nephropathy and Its Predictors among Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus Patients at University of Gondar Comprehensive Specialized Hospital, Northwest Ethiopia

Sewnet Adem Kebede | Biruk Shalmeno Tusa | ... | Tadesse Awoke Ayele

29 Aug 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6936025 - Research Article

Effects of Fermented *Houttuynia cordata* Thunb. on Diabetic Rats Induced by a High-Fat Diet with Streptozotocin and on Insulin Resistance in 3T3-L1 Adipocytes

Wannachai Sakuludomkan | Ranchana Yeewa | ... | Teera Chewonarin

06 Aug 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6675418 - Research Article

Identification of Salty Dietary Patterns of the Japanese Macroregion

Masana Yokoya | Miyuki Fukuhara | ... | Aki Terada

22 Jul 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 9964143 - Research Article

Article of the Year Award: Outstanding research contributions of 2021, as selected by our Chief Editors. [Read the winning articles.](#)

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism

21 Jul 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 5736864 - Research Article

High-Prevalence Stunting in Preschool Children (1–5 Years) Attending Selected Health Centers in a Food Rich Area-Bushenyi District Southwestern Uganda

Douglas Mugarura | Herbert Izo Ninsiima | ... | Andrew Ndamira

20 Jul 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 4218023 - Research Article

Determinants of Undernutrition among Adult Tuberculosis Patients Receiving Treatment in Public Health Institutions in Shashemane Town, Southern Ethiopia

Adane Tesfaye Anbesse | Gudina Egeta | ... | Abinet Arega Sadore

14 Jul 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 5581445 - Research Article

Income Level but Not Nutrition Knowledge Is Associated with Dietary Diversity of Rural Pregnant Women from Northern Ghana

Emmanuel Amoako Agyei | Stephen Kofi Afrifa | ... | Victor Mogre

13 Jul 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 9944035 - Research Article

Article of the Year Award: Outstanding research contributions of 2021, as selected by our Chief Editors. [Read the winning articles.](#)

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism

28 Jun 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 8876851 - Research Article

Prevalence and Predictors of Stunting among Primary School Children in Northeast Ethiopia

Getaw Walle Bazie | Mohammed Seid | Gudina Egata

25 Jun 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 1861567 - Research Article

Short-Term Influence of Caffeine and Medium-Chain Triglycerides on Ketogenesis: A Controlled Double-Blind Intervention Study

Anna Baumeister | Joachim Gardemann | ... | Tobias Fischer

16 Jun 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 5591697 - Research Article

Dietary Vitamin C and Age-Induced Lipid and Hormonal Metabolic Changes in a Humanized Mouse Model Not Synthesizing Vitamin C and Producing Lipoprotein(a) [Gulo (-/-); Lp(a)+]

Lei Shi | Matthias Rath | Aleksandra Niedzwiecki

16 Jun 2021

PDF



First

← 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 →

Last



Author guidelines

Table of Contents

2021



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 9987141 - Research Article

Vitamin D Deficiency Is Common in Ghana despite Abundance of Sunlight: A Multicentre Comparative Cross-Sectional Study

Samuel Asamoah Sakyi | Maxwell Hubert Antwi | ... | Tonnies Abeku Buckman

11 Jun 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 9949453 - Review Article

N-Acetylcysteine: A Review of Clinical Usefulness (an Old Drug with New Tricks)

Gerry K. Schwalfenberg

10 Jun 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 5550222 - Research Article

Epidemiologic Data of Vitamin D Deficiency and Its Implication in Cardio-Cerebrovascular Risk in a Southern Italian Population

Rocco Capuano | Federica Marchese | ... | Vincenzo Capuano

08 Jun 2021

PDF



Article of the Year Award: Outstanding research contributions of 2021, as selected by our Chief Editors. [Read the winning articles.](#)

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism

Almeida Abudo Leite Machamba | Francilene Maria Azevedo | ... | Sylvia do Carmo Castro Franceschini

03 Jun 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6667608 - Research Article

Association between Maternal Dietary Diversity and Low Birth Weight in Central India: A Case-Control Study

Shantanu Sharma | Sonali Maheshwari | Sunil Mehra

30 May 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6672185 - Research Article

Nutritional Status of Patients on Maintenance Hemodialysis at Muhimbili National Hospital in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: A Cross-Sectional Study

Puneet Bramania | Paschal Ruggajo | ... | Francis Furia

24 May 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 1825209 - Research Article

Effect of Taro Starch, Beet Juice, Probiotic, and/or Psicose on Gut Microbiota in a Type 2 Diabetic Rat Model: A Pilot Study

Ingrid S. Surono | Ata Aditya Wardana | ... | Koen Venema

21 May 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 5591662 - Research Article

Article of the Year Award: Outstanding research contributions of 2021, as selected by our Chief Editors. [Read the winning articles.](#)

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism

07 May 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 8830494 - Research Article

Comparison of Mid-Upper-Arm Circumference and Weight-For-Height Z-Score in Identifying Severe Acute Malnutrition among Children Aged 6–59 Months in South Gondar Zone, Ethiopia

Dereje Birhanu Abitew | Alemayehu Worku Yalew | ... | Alessandra N. Bazzano

05 May 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6621278 - Research Article

Quality of Life and Nutritional Status of the Geriatric Population of the South-Central Part of Nepal

Sabita Sharma | Dipendra Kumar Yadav | ... | Raju Pandey

03 May 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6691982 - Research Article

Prevalence of Undernutrition and Associated Factors among Lactating Mothers of Angecha District, Kembata Tembaro Zone, Southern Ethiopia

Moges Muluneh Boke | Aman Yesuf | Befikadu Tariku Gutema

27 Apr 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6655064 - Review Article

The Aging GABAergic System and Its Nutritional Support

Article of the Year Award: Outstanding research contributions of 2021, as selected by our Chief Editors. [Read the winning articles.](#)

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 8878703 - Research Article

Vitamin A Supplementation Coverage and Ocular Signs among Children Aged 6–59 Months in Aleta Chuko Woreda, Sidama Zone, Southern Ethiopia

Temesgen Nigusse | Achamyesh Gebretsadik

24 Apr 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6630450 - Research Article

Adequately Iodized Salt Utilization and Associated Factors among Households in Tach Armachio District, Northwest Ethiopia: A Community-Based Cross-Sectional Study

Worku Mamo | Terefe Derso | Solomon Gedlu Nigatu

16 Apr 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6634225 - Research Article

Effect of a High-Protein High-Fibre Nutritional Supplement on Lipid Profile in Overweight/Obese Adults with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus: A 24-Week Randomized Controlled Trial

Rachana Bhoite | Anitha Chandrasekaran | ... | Viswanathan Mohan

16 Apr 2021

PDF



First

← 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 →

Last



Author guidelines

Table of Contents

2021



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6629951 - Research Article

Salivary Protein Profile and Food Intake: A Dietary Pattern Analysis

Teresa Louro | Carla Simões | ... | Elsa Lamy

16 Apr 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 9629718 - Research Article

Anthropometric Markers and Iron Status of 6–12-Year-Old Thai Children: Associations and Predictors

Orapa Suteerajtrakool | Tharida Khongcharoensombat | ... | Mary Fewtrell

13 Apr 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6639935 - Research Article

Malnutrition among the Elderly in Malaysia and Its Associated Factors: Findings from the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2018

Mohamad Hasnan Ahmad | Ruhaya Salleh | ... | Noor Ani Ahmad

13 Apr 2021

PDF



Article of the Year Award: Outstanding research contributions of 2021, as selected by our Chief Editors. [Read the winning articles.](#)

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism

Cross-sectional Study

Jackline D. Mrema | Ester Elisaria | ... | Cornelio M. Nyaruhucha

12 Apr 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 3806360 - Research Article

Dietary Diversity Feeding Practice and Its Associated Factors among Infants and Young Children Aged between 6 and 23 Months in Birbir Town, Southern Ethiopia

Tseganesh Habtamu | Sindu Debebe | ... | Selamawit Gebeyehu Tiruneh

07 Apr 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6654817 - Research Article

Diagnostic Concordance between Random Upper Arm Circumference and Mid Upper Arm Circumference Measurements among Children Aged 6–59 Months in South Ethiopia: A Community-Based Cross-Sectional Study

Juhar Admama Bamud | Afework Mulugeta Bezabih | ... | Getahun Fentaw Mulaw

01 Apr 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6610455 - Research Article

Impact of Ramadan Intermittent Fasting on the Heart Rate Variability and Cardiovascular Parameters of Patients with Controlled Hypertension

Sabah Hammoud | Iman Saad | ... | Mazen Kurdi

30 Mar 2021

PDF



Article of the Year Award: Outstanding research contributions of 2021, as selected by our Chief Editors. [Read the winning articles.](#)

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism

Southwest Ethiopia: A Cross-Sectional Study

Aman Kedir Obsa | Yadesse Tegene | Achamyelesh Gebretsadik

28 Mar 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 5527736 - Research Article

Association of Apolipoprotein E Gene Polymorphism with Lipid Profile and Ischemic Stroke Risk in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus Patients

Ni Putu Tesi Maratni | Made Ratna Saraswati | ... | Ketut Suastika

26 Mar 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6633700 - Research Article

Insulin Resistance Indexes as Biomarkers of Lifetime Cardiovascular Risk among Adults from Peru

Ricardo Rojas-Humpire | Mely Olarte-Durand | ... | Salomon Huancahuire-Vega

25 Mar 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 5560714 - Research Article

Nutrition Knowledge among College of Basic Education Students in Kuwait: A Cross-Sectional Study

Wafaa Husain | Fatemah Ashkanani | Maryam A. Al Dwairji

25 Mar 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 8868450 - Research Article

Article of the Year Award: Outstanding research contributions of 2021, as selected by our Chief Editors. [Read the winning articles.](#)

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism

12 Mar 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6683657 - Research Article

Sucrose-Sweetened Drinks Reduce the Physical Performance and Increase the Cardiovascular Risk in Physically Active Males

Raianne dos Santos Baleeiro | Aparecida Patricia Guimarães | ... | Lenice Kappes Becker

09 Mar 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 8029413 - Research Article

Extract of *Aloe vera* (*Aloe barbadensis* Miller) Enhances the Growth, Protein Contents, and Gastrosomatic Index (GaSI) of Common Carp *Cyprinus carpio*

Munu Khanal | Sirjana Lamichhane | ... | Shyam Narayan Labh

05 Mar 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6657567 - Research Article

Evaluation of Eating Habits and Quality of Life in Postbariatric Surgery Patients and Their Family Members: A Case-Control Study

Carla Ibrahim | Joane Matta | ... | Yonna Sacre

02 Mar 2021

PDF



First

← 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 →

Last



Author guidelines

Table of Contents

2021



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 8899931 - Research Article

Darker Skin Color Measured by Von Luschan Chromatic Scale and Increased Sunlight Exposure Time Are Independently Associated with Decreased Odds of Vitamin D Deficiency in Thai Ambulatory Patients

Nipith Charoenngam | Sutin Sriussadaporn

28 Feb 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6654659 - Research Article

Food Choice Behaviors of Lactating Women: Association with Body Mass Index and Fruits and Vegetables Intake in Central Amhara Region, Ethiopia—An Observational Study

Gesessew Kibr

28 Feb 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 8824753 - Research Article

Effects of Lemon Beverage Containing Citric Acid with Calcium Supplementation on Bone Metabolism and Mineral Density in Postmenopausal Women: Double-Blind 11-Month Intervention Study

Hiromi Ikeda | Tadayuki Iida | ... | Toshihide Harada

Article of the Year Award: Outstanding research contributions of 2021, as selected by our Chief Editors. [Read the winning articles.](#)

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism

Appraisal Resources in an Academic Genre: English versus Persian Nutrition Research Articles

Mavadat Saidi

25 Feb 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 8824951 - Research Article

Malnutrition in the Outcome of Wound Healing at Public Hospitals in Bahir Dar City, Northwest Ethiopia: A Prospective Cohort Study

Netsanet Fentahun | Yeabsira Anteneh | Yonatan Member

19 Feb 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6685581 - Review Article

A Concise Review of Ketogenic Dietary Interventions in the Management of Rare Diseases

D. Hettiarachchi | K. Lakmal | V. H. W. Dissanayake

15 Feb 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 8835704 - Research Article

Nutritional Knowledge and Dietary Intake Habits among Pregnant Adolescents Attending Antenatal Care Clinics in Urban Community in Ghana

Prince Kubi Appiah | Anang Rhoda Naa Korklu | ... | Francis Wadga-Mieza Yankey

Article of the Year Award: Outstanding research contributions of 2021, as selected by our Chief Editors. [Read the winning articles.](#)

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism

Stunting and Associated Factors among Under-Five-Age Children in West Guji Zone, Oromia, Ethiopia

Eyob Afework | Selamawit Mengesha | Demelash Wachamo

04 Feb 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6688462 - Research Article

Factors Associated with Adherence to the Mediterranean Diet and Dietary Habits among University Students in Lebanon

Jennifer S. El Hajj | Sofi G. Julien

25 Jan 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6496134 - Research Article

Children's Eating Behavior Questionnaire Correlated with Body Compositions of Thai Children and Adolescents with Obesity: A Pilot Study

Ekkarit Panichsillaphakit | Yuda Chongpison | ... | Chonnikant Visuthranukul

15 Jan 2021

PDF



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 8892180 - Research Article

Iodine Deficiency Disorder and Knowledge about Benefit and Food Source of Iodine among Adolescent Girls in the North Shewa Zone of Amhara Region

Abayneh Birlie Zeru | Mikyas Arega Muluneh | ... | Michael Amera Tizazu


13 Jan 2021

PDF




Article of the Year Award: Outstanding research contributions of 2021, as selected by our Chief Editors. [Read the winning articles.](#)

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism

Article		
Boštjan Jakše Barbara Jakše ... Ivan Čuk		
12 Jan 2021	PDF	

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 8515607 - Research Article		
Vitamin D Status and Usual Nutrient Intake of Filipino Children Aged 6–12 Years in Selected Areas in the Philippines: A 2018 National Nutrition Survey		
Imelda Angeles-Agdeppa Keith V. Tanda		
12 Jan 2021	PDF	

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 6684839 - Research Article		
Prevalence of Anemia and Undernutrition of Adolescent Females in Selected Schools in Ghana		
Marina Aferiba Tandoh Abigail Owusua Appiah Anthony Kwaku Edusei		
09 Jan 2021	PDF	

Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 4898970 - Research Article		
Malnutrition in School-Going Adolescents in Dessie Town, South Wollo, Ethiopia		
Gizachew Mulu Birru Sisay Eshete Tadesse ... Muluken Genetu Chane		
07 Jan 2021	PDF	

Table of Contents

2021



Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism - Volume 2021 - Article ID 8850241 - Research Article

Chronic Energy Deficiency and Its Determinant Factors among Adults Aged 18–59 Years in Ethiopia: A Cross-Sectional Study

Samuel Dagne | Yonatan Menber | ... | Zelalem T. Haile

06 Jan 2021

PDF



First

[←](#) [3](#) | [4](#) | [5](#) | **[6](#)** | [→](#)

Last

[Author guidelines](#)[Editorial board](#)[Databases and indexing](#)

[+ Journal Menu](#)[☰ Page Sections](#)

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Print editions

Authors

Editors

Research Article

Fad Diets, Body Image, Nutritional Status, and Nutritional Adequacy of Female Models in Malang City

Mutiara Vidianinggar, Trias. Mahmudiono , and Dominikus Atmaka

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Female model has a variety of body image and experiences social pressure to have low weight. Thus, there is a desire to lose weight with a variety of efforts, such as fad diets. This type of diet can lead to insufficient intake of nutrients in the body and increase the risk of health problems in the long run. The research aimed to analyze fad diets, nutritional status, and nutritional adequacy of female models in Malang. The research design was cross-sectional in 52 female models aged 18–25 years who were selected by simple random sampling. The data of fad diets used in the questionnaire, nutritional status data using the calculation of the last body weight and height, and nutritional adequacy were measured using 2 × 24 hour food recall. Data analysis used the chi-square test. The results of this research showed that most respondents implement fad diets (69%), had negative body image (62%), had a skinny at high level (22%), skinny at mild level (44%), and normal (33%) of nutritional status, and had inadequate nutritional adequacy (77%). There was a significant ($p = 0.023$) correlation between fad diets and nutritional adequacy ($r = 0.369$), and in addition, there was a significant correlation ($p = 0.041$) between nutritional status and nutritional adequacy ($r = 0.35$). It is concluded that the female models who implemented fad diets and nutritional status below normal tended to not have adequate levels of nutritional adequacy because of improper food selection and psychological factors. Female models are expected to be able to conduct weight loss with the assistance of a nutritionist or in accordance with balanced nutrition guidelines.

1. Introduction

Female models often feel unsatisfied with their body shape because of social pressure that requires them to appear with strong and perfect character both technically and artistically, where their assumption is a thin body shape, low body weight, and low fat content. Demands from the agency and the environment encourage some female models to change body shape, exercise, and consumption of weight-loss pills and make efforts to lose weight by “dieting” to reach a body mass index (BMI) below normal (17.5 kg/m^2) [1, 2]. The population of adolescents who work as models is one of the high-risk populations experiencing nutritional problems because they have a strong desire to be thinner compared to the nonmodel group [3]. Body image is the subjective imagination that a person has about his body, especially in relation to other people’s judgments, and how well their body should be

adjusted to these perceptions [4]. Body image is a trigger level for the emergence of eating disorders in a person [5].

The weight-loss method used by adolescent girls is on average unhealthy or commonly called fad diets [1]. The demands of the agency cause wrong dietary perspectives among the models that are caused by low knowledge and high acceptance of the sources of diet types that circulate among the people. Models believe that unhealthy eating restriction including fad diet is beneficial to their weight-loss program. The American Dietetic Association defines fad diet is diet that promises instant weight loss without having to exercise but is not based on a clear scientific basis. This type of unsafe diet can pose a risk of various health problems such as ketosis, disruption of fluid, and electrolyte balance, to cause kidney damage [6].

A diet that carried out with the wrong method continuously will result in insufficient nutrition. Inadequate

nutrition can disrupt the metabolic processes in the body, and one of which is hypoglycemia. In Indonesia, there are only few research studies about eating behavior because it is still considered a trivial problem. In fact, this eating disorder can be caused by several wrong perceptions, such as the perception that a thin body is the ideal body shape, thus triggering women to make various efforts to lose weight instantly due to the low psychological aspects and knowledge aspects. Inadequate nutrient intake in the body, such as the result of fad diet, might increase the risk of health problems in the long run. Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the association between fad diets, nutritional adequacy, body image, and nutritional status of female models in Malang City. The hypothesis of this study is that fad diets can affect nutritional status and nutritional insufficiency in female models.

2. Materials and Methods

This research was analytical observational research with cross-sectional design. This research was conducted in March to May 20 in some model agencies such as Color Model, Posh Modeling School, Gabs Modeling, SZ Model Management, Front Row, Duta Hijab Management, and Red Modeling. The population in this research was women working as fashion models with an age range of 18–25 years. The inclusion criteria in this research were women aged 18–25 years old, registered with the agency in Malang City, active in the last 1 month, and not in a state of illness or recovering from illness while the exclusion criterion was not experiencing metabolic disorders and eating disorders. The sample size was 52 people based on the simple random sampling formula, using conventional power of 80%. Participants of this study were contacted via online in accordance to physical distancing guideline due to COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

Independent variable in this research was fad diet and nutritional status while the dependent variable was nutritional adequacy. The fad diet data were obtained using measurements with the fad diet questionnaire adapted by Sulistyono [7] which has been validated for the same population characteristics (Nurjannah, 2018). This questionnaire had 10 questions consisting of questions about dietary efforts and closed questions (yes/no) about the type of fad diet that respondents have or are currently doing. The correct answer was given 2; if the wrong answer was given 1, to make the calculation easier, the question-type fad diet result was classified as doing fad diets if the score >9 , and if subjects get score ≤ 9 , then it is categorized as not doing fad diets. The nutritional status was obtained from measurements of body weight and height carried out during the evaluation of the agency in the past month, then included in the BMI formula from the Health Department 2013, with the category skinny at high level (BMI < 17), skinny at mild level (BMI 17.1–18.4), normal (BMI 18.5–25), mild fat (BMI 25.1– >27), and severe fat (BMI > 27.1). The body image questionnaire was adapted from the theory of Cash [8]. This questionnaire used a Likert-type scale (1 = very unsuitable; 4 = appropriate) to measure the

response of the subjects. The score is obtained from the sum of all items and is categorized as a positive body image = score < 115 and negative body image = score > 115 . Data on the nutrition adequacy level were measured through interviews with the 2 \times 24 hour food recall questionnaire for 2 nonconsecutive days. The recall results were processed average of 2 \times 24 hours using NutriSurvey, and the results were compared with the 2019 Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for women aged 18–25 years, which were then classified as lacking (average intake $< 77\%$ RDA) or sufficient (average intake $> 77\%$ RDA).

Data analysis was carried out using the statistic program through the chi-square test. The value of the chi-square test interpreted in this research was the value of r . It was the contingency coefficient value (r) which was performed to find out the strength of a relationship between variables. This study was approved by the ethics commission of the Faculty of Dentistry, Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, on April 13th, 2018, under number 121/HRECC.FODM/III/2020.

3. Results

The results are shown in Tables 1–6.

4. Discussion

The results of the research showed that girl models were classified as early adulthood with an average age of 21 years. Almost all models of respondents were categorized in early adult and had a career of 5 years and 7 months [9]. The productive period of a model started at the age of 18–25 years, or about 6 years [4]. However, there were 6 respondents or around 11.6% who had worked in the model world for more than 11 years. Their career had a large impact on their ideal weight concerns. This triggered the emergence of body dissatisfaction in female models that had an impact on weight-loss efforts with excessive dieting, which leads to eating disorders [8].

The results of this study indicate that 62% of the respondents have a negative body image. The most models of young women feel dissatisfied with their bodies because of the demands of work that require the appearance and ideal body shape [9]. A female model who has a negative body image perception will have an influence in making efforts to reduce food consumption which will lead to eating disorders. Based on Table 1, it can be seen that more than half (69.0%) of respondents currently (and ever) make efforts to lose weight by the fad diet method. The fad diet method is considered unhealthy because this diet directs a person to consume low calories and nutrients [10].

Based on Table 2, it is known that the type of fad diet that is mostly done by respondents is consuming drinks that are believed to be able to eliminate fat (slimming products such as shakers, slimming tea, and fibrous drinks) as much as 57.6% and dietary methods by consuming one type of food only (carbohydrates, protein alone, or fruit and vegetables only) with a percentage of 55.7%. It was known from the total number of teenage girls at SMAN 8, Yogyakarta, who

TABLE 1: The distribution of respondents' characteristic, fad diets, and body image of female models in Malang City.

Characteristic of respondent	Number (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (%)
Age (year)		
18–20	18	35
21–23	21	40
23–25	13	25
TB (cm)		
156–161	12	23
162–167	15	29
168–173	19	37
174–179	6	11
BB (kg)		
40–45	10	19
46–50	21	40
51–55	14	27
56–60	7	14
Type fad diets		
Fad diets	36	69
Not fad diets	16	31
Body image		
Negative	33	62
Positive	19	38

TABLE 2: The distribution of fad diets based on the questionnaire.

Question of body image questionnaire	<i>n</i>	(%)
Diet method I apply is decreasing eating frequency in a day (such as skipping breakfast/dinner)	26	50
Diet method I apply is eating certain combinations of food (for example, rice, vegetables, and protein during the day, rice and vegetables at night, fruit only on the first day, etc.)	17	32.6
Diet method I apply is avoiding certain foods (carbohydrates, sweet foods, and fatty foods) and replacing them with vitamin and mineral supplements	24	46.1
Diet method I apply is consuming just one particular type of food (for example, just carbohydrates, only protein, only fruits, and vegetables)	29	55.7
Diet method I apply is consuming drinks that are believed to eliminate fat (for example, slimming products such as shakes, slimming tea, and fibrous drinks)	30	57.6
Diet method I apply is taking diet pills (slimming pills and fat removal pills)	26	50

had fad diet of 23.8% of respondents reduced certain types of food and frequency of eating [7]. Many female models had unhealthy dietary habits included skipping meals, fasting, excessive detoxification, and consumption of diet pills [2]. In addition, unequal and unequal eating habits had an impact on menstrual irregularities in women [11].

In Table 3, it is known that most respondents have underweight nutritional status. The female population who work as models is one of the high-risk populations experiencing nutritional problems because the model groups tend to be underweight [3]. Women models have a lower BMI in women in general [1]. This is quite worrying because female models who are malnourished have a greater risk of developing infectious diseases, anemia, and decreased learning achievement [5].

In Table 4, it can be seen that only 23% of respondents have nutritional adequacy according to the recommendation of the RDA, while 77% have a nutritional adequacy that is less than the RDA. This result was supported by the results of the 2010 Basic Health Research which found that 54.5% of the adolescent age population (16–18 years) had an energy intake below the minimum requirement [12].

TABLE 3: The distribution of nutritional status of female models in Malang City.

Category	Number (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (%)
Skinny at high level	12	23
Skinny at mild level	23	44
Normal	17	33

TABLE 4: The distribution of nutritional adequacy of female models in Malang City.

Category	Number (<i>n</i>)	Percentage (%)
Adequate	12	23
Not adequate	40	77

Based on Table 5, most respondents conduct diet in wrong ways. Thus, energy intake becomes low. Respondents reduced the frequency of eating and reduced the portion of carbohydrates, not even consuming carbohydrates at all in one day. Lack of carbohydrate intake continuously will cause health problems such as chronic energy deficiency (CED),

TABLE 5: The distribution of respondents based on level of energy adequacy and macronutrition of female models in Malang City.

Nutrient	Adequate		Less	
	<i>n</i>	(%)	<i>n</i>	(%)
Energy (kcal)	9	17.3	43	82.7
Carbohydrate (g)	5	9.6	47	90.4
Protein (g)	29	55.7	23	44.3
Fat (g)	27	51.9	25	48.1

TABLE 6: The relation of fad diets, body image, nutritional status, and adequacy of nutrition of female models.

Variable	Adequacy of nutrition				Total	<i>p</i> value	<i>r</i> value
	Less	Adequate					
	<i>n</i>	(%)	<i>n</i>	(%)	<i>n</i>	(%)	
Fad diets							
Yes	32	88.8	4	11.2	36	100	0.023
No	9	56.25	7	43.75	16	100	
Body image							
Negative	31	93.9	2	6.1	33	100	0.001
Positive	10	52.6	9	47.4	19	100	
Nutritional status							
Skinny at mild level	21	91.3	2	0.7	23	100	0.041
Skinny at high level	10	83	2	17	12	100	
Normal	10	58.8	7	41.2	17	100	

constipation, and diverticulosis [6]. The average carbohydrate intake of the female model is 161 grams (45%), whereas in reality, carbohydrate intake is important enough to maintain glycogen reserves to support the activities of the female model which are quite dense and avoid injury from rigid catwalk exercises using high wheels.

Based on Table 6, it is known that respondents who have a negative body image are more likely to have less nutritional status (93.9%), but respondents who have a positive body image also still have insufficient levels of nutritional adequacy (52.6%). In the chi-square test, the *p* value was 0.001, so it can be concluded that body image has a relationship with nutritional adequacy. And then 88.8% of respondents with a lack of adequate nutrition apply fad diets. These results indicated a dietary effort with fad diet resulted in low levels of nutritional adequacy of the respondents. The results of the analysis of the strength of the relationship showed the results of a strong correlation between fad diet and the level of nutrient adequacy. The most women who work as models have adequate levels of energy and macronutrients under the DRI (Dietary Reference Intake) and use the fad diet method by reducing the frequency of eating to 2 times a day and avoiding the consumption of carbohydrates, proteins, and fat so that they consume only fruits and vegetables [13].

Fad diets are a common method used by people with rapid weight loss, but only the amount of water and muscle loss, not fat tissue [14]. Other fat diet methods such as low-carbohydrate/high-protein and fat diets cause a change in the main energy source, from glucose to fatty acids and ketones, which can cause ketosis. Ketosis has been shown to reduce weight and improve body fat and glucose profiles, but this diet has both acute and chronic risks [15]. Carbohydrate consumption can affect human cognitive function, because

the brain consumes the most energy from glucose, which is 20% of the total energy intake that enters the body [16].

This research has point of combining elements of psychology with nutritional aspects which are felt to affect the health problems of female models in the long run. However, this research has limitations, namely, interviews and questionnaires are conducted online (Google form and video call), since the time of the study coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic disaster and the existence of a social distancing policy which resulted in the agency not scheduling training and limiting meetings with respondents. Researchers cannot control for other factors that can confound and influence respondents, such as when conducting recall interviews between stays home describing eating patterns that may be different from daily eating patterns, thus allowing for bias.

5. Conclusions

Most women have negative body image and nutritional status below normal (underweight) with the category of mild-to-thin underweight. Some respondents who have negative body image and nutritional status below normal are currently (or ever) applying the fad diets diet method by consuming drinks that are believed to eliminate fat (slimming products such as shakers, slimming teas, and fibrous drinks), consuming only one type of food (carbohydrates only, protein only, or fruit and vegetables only), resulting in inadequate nutritional intake in the body. The female model is expected to increase the frequency of eating in a day, which was originally from twice a day to three times a day by implementing a balanced nutritionally appropriate diet through consultation with a nutritionist to achieve an ideal body.

Data Availability

The data used to support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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