Acceptance of Legumes as a Food Group among Sri Lankan Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Background: Although legumes are a staple food worldwide, its consumption has seen a decline in recent times.

Objective: To evaluate the acceptance of legumes as a food group and to identify the levels of legume consumption among Sri Lankan young adults.

Study Design, Settings, Participants: A cross-sectional online survey focusing on the legume consumption was evaluated from a group of undergraduate students (n=180) of ages 19-24 in July 2020.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: Legume consumers were subdivided based on their recent legume consumption pattern: those who consume below current dietary recommendation (<45g/d, low), those consume above current dietary recommendations; but below levels demonstrating nutritional and disease prevention benefits (45g and 87.5g/d, marginal), and at levels demonstrating nutritional and disease prevention benefits (>87.5g/d, disease prevention). The legume consumption groups were identified to evaluate their differences in consumption, perceived importance, benefits and barriers.

Results: The majority were legume consumers (75%) and the mean intake of legume consumption was 114.64g/d, while consumption of lentils (48%) accounts for nearly half of the legume consumption compared to other legume varieties (52%). Most consumers belonged to the disease prevention consumer group (59%). Lentils were the most often consumed, followed by green legumes, chickpeas and green grams, which were most commonly consumed as a curry or either as a breakfast item. Consumers were well-aware of legumes' benefits as a good protein source and as a meat alternative and had fewer barriers for their consumption. The main barriers perceived by non-consumers and low consumers were the cost of legumes and preparation challenges.

Conclusions: The acceptance of legumes as a food group among the young adults was fair.

BACKGROUND

• Legumes are an important part of a daily diet.
• But its consumption in the world as well as in Sri Lanka remains low.
• To increase the consumption of legumes in the population, it is imperative to determine the importance, benefits, and barriers for its consumption.
• Hence, the main objectives of this study were:
  1. To quantify the current consumption patterns of legumes among Sri Lankan young adults.
  2. To evaluate the perceived importance, benefits & barriers of legume consumption among Sri Lankan young adults and
  3. To suggest remedies to promote legumes as a strategy for dietary diversification among Sri Lankan young adults.

METHODS

A cross-sectional online survey focusing on the legume consumption patterns, perceived importance, benefits and barriers for consumption and remedies to promote legumes as a food group was evaluated from a conveniently selected group of undergraduate students (n=180) of ages 19-24 in July 2020.

RESULTS

• The majority were legume consumers (75%).
• The mean intake of legume consumption was 114.64g/d, while consumption of lentils (48%) accounts for nearly half of the legume consumption compared to other legume varieties (52%).
• Most consumers belonged to the disease prevention consumer group (59%).
• Lentils were the most often consumed, followed by green legumes, chickpeas and green grams, which were most commonly consumed as a curry or either as a breakfast item.

CONCLUSIONS

• Consumers were well-aware of legumes' benefits as a good protein source and as a meat alternative and had fewer barriers for their consumption.
• The main barriers perceived by non-consumers and low consumers were the cost of legumes and preparation challenges.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The study was conducted as a part of undergraduate research conducted at Wayamba University of Sri Lanka.

No funding source/ SNEB Nutrition Educator Competencies 7.1, 7.2 & 8.1
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