



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.

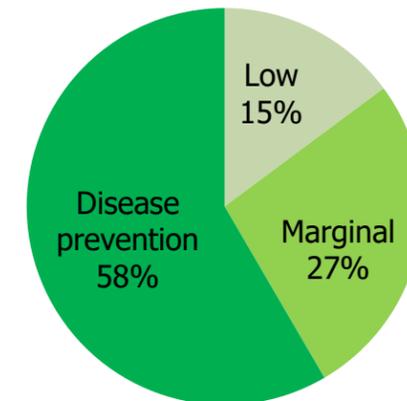


Figure 1: Overall Consumption of Legumes in the Sample



- 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 and the differences between consumption were due to poor knowledge about legumes' disease prevention benefits, legume and recipe variety, and legume preparation techniques.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

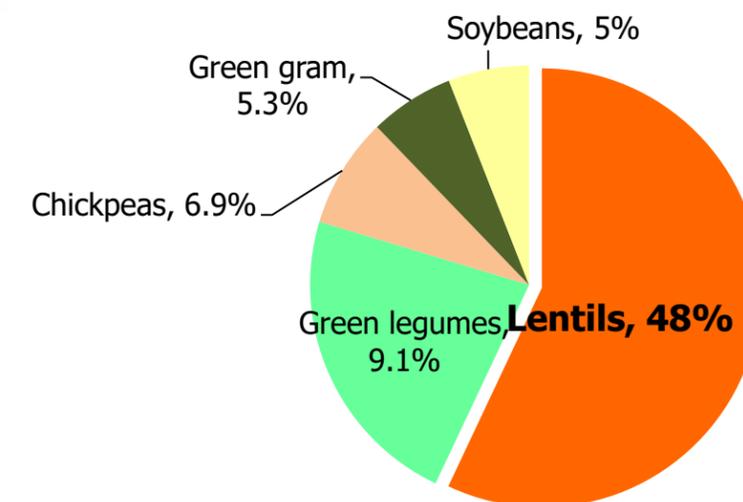


Figure 2: Breakdown of Legume Consumption

- **Major benefits: Legumes are good for health and rich in nutrients**
- **Major barriers: Cost and preparation challenges**
- **Lack of knowledge on disease prevention benefits against NCDs**