

Assessment of Awareness and Socio – Economic Status on Edible Oil Consumption among Housewives in Dehiwala Divisional Secretariat Area

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Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) prevail in the present-day society due to unhealthy food habits and inactive lifestyle of the people. Excessive consumption of edible oil is a cause for obesity which is a contributory factor for NCDs. Edible oils should be used in moderation by adopting proper methods of cooking to minimize their unhealthy effects.

A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out in Dehiwala divisional secretariat area to assess the awareness, socio-economic status on edible oil consumption among housewives and, the individual's fat intake through edible oil consumption. Since, the total fat intake of an individual includes fats received from coconut kernel, processed coconut milk and coconut milk powder used in food preparations, in addition to edible oils, fats coming from these food items were also considered in calculating the daily per capita fat intake.

The study sample consisted of 405 randomly selected housewives representing all the fifteen Grama Niladari divisions of the area including 27 housewives from each division. Data were gathered using a self-administered questionnaire.

Results showed that daily per capita edible oil consumption was 59.75 ml. Only 31.50% housewives consumed edible oils, within the recommended level of fat and oil intake per person as in Food based dietary guidelines for Sri Lankans, prepared by the Ministry of Health. The daily per capita fat intake by consuming edible oil together with coconut kernel, processed coconut milk and coconut milk powder was 80.13 g. 77.75% housewives used edible oils and coconut products in food preparations to receive energy more than the amount of energy recommended to be received from fat (no more than 30% of the total energy coming from fat). Chi-square test results showed that there were significant relationships between educational level of housewives and the type of edible oil used ($p < 0.01$) and monthly family income and the type of edible oil used ($p < 0.01$).

Since, the majority of the individuals consume more fat than the recommended level, there is a need for an intervention to educate people on healthy use of edible oil as to prevent from obesity, a contributory factor of NCDs.

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