

FACTORS INFLUENCE EATING BEHAVIOR OF EARLY ADOLESCENTS

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Key words: eating behavior, adolescent

Eating behavior in adolescents has been known to be associated with the risks of overweight and obesity resulting in such problems as diabetes mellitus, hypertension, and certain psychosocial issues. To prevent these problems and to promote the optimum health of adolescents, nurse should know about their eating behavior and the influencing factors. The purpose of this study was to examine eating behavior of early adolescents and the factors affecting their behavior.

The participants included 410 early adolescents studying in grade 7 in public schools in Bangkok Metropolis. All participants were asked to complete a series of questionnaires measuring their perceived benefits ($\alpha = .72$), perceived barriers ($\alpha = .80$), perceived self-efficacy ($\alpha = .76$), interpersonal influence ($\alpha = .92$), and their eating behaviour ($\alpha = .68$). Their weight and height were also measured by the researcher.

Multiple regression analysis revealed that all key variables including perceived benefits, perceived barriers, perceived self-efficacy, and interpersonal influence accounted for 14.1% of the variance. However, only perceived barrier and perceived self-efficacy could significantly predict the adolescents' eating behavior ($\beta = -.153, p < .01$ and $\beta = .299, p < .001$, respectively). The findings of the study suggested that the barriers to practicing healthy eating of early adolescents should be explored and the resolutions should also be pointed out if the adolescents cannot resolve those barriers. Empowering adolescents' self-efficacy to eat healthily in various situations is also of benefits.

Funding: This study is part of the Health promotion model in overweight primary school children project, funded by the Thai Health Promotion Foundation.

Source: Journal of Nursing Science, 2009, 27(3): 58-67.

: Poster presentation for “3rd Hong Kong Nursing Conference”

5 – 6 June 2009. Hong Kong