

A STUDY ON THE NUTRITION-RELATED ATTITUDES AND BODY MASS INDEXES OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS USING SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

Social media has become an important part of our lives today. Many things in our daily life have become focused on the internet and social media. Our eating behaviors and body weight may also be under the influence. The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of social media on eating behavior and body mass index in university students.

610 university students from different universities and faculties from Ankara, Turkey aged 18 - 28 years participated in the study. The sociodemographic characteristics, social media usage and information's related to eating behaviors of the students were gathered with face-to-face interview method using a questionnaire form prepared by the researchers. Body weight and height data of the individuals were recorded according to their statements and body mass index values were calculated. Data analysis was performed in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows package program. The reliability coefficient was accepted as $p < 0.05$.

Most of the respondents were single (99.5%), undergraduate student (93.8%), non-employed (93.9%) and staying in dorm (56.1%). The mean body mass index was 22.4 kg/m^2 and the median body mass index of the men was higher than the girls ($p < 0.05$). The relationship between social media usage time and body mass index in both sexes was found to statistically insignificant ($p > 0.05$). However, the mean body mass indexes of the students who were interested in the news of the slimming news on social media were higher ($p < 0.05$). In addition, after being seen in the social media, the foods that wanted to be consumed most were cakes and other desserts. Fast food type foods (döner, hamburger, iskender, etc.) took place in second and third.

It has been concluded that university students who use continuously social media are affected by social media. Losing weight efforts of even those with normal body mass index indicate that social media may contribute to eating behaviors' disorders. For this reason solutions for young people to gain healthy lifestyle habits should be search through media and social media.

Key words: *Social media, Young individuals, Nutrition news, Unhealthy foods, Body mass index.*