

EATING HABITS OF ADULTS IN SLOVAKIA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic, domestic isolation and lockdown have resulted a change in people's lifestyles habits and behaviours, including nutritional behaviour worldwide. The aim of the research was to evaluate selected nutritional and health indicators and changes in eating habits of adults in Slovakia affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The group (n = 860; 50.1% women) consisted of adults who did not have COVID-19, with a mean age of 41.3 ± 10.1 years. The comparison of eating habits from the online questionnaire was focused on the period before the pandemic vs. during the pandemic. The values of anthropometric parameters were obtained by the self-reported method. We used the software Statistica 10.0 (StatSoft Inc., USA) for statistical evaluation.

Body weight increased during the pandemic in 39.2% of those surveyed. Significant ($p < 0.05$) weight loss was observed in men. During the pandemic, there was an increase in the consumption of milk and dairy products in 13.7% of respondents, but significantly ($p < 0.001$) more women (17.2% vs. 10%) limited the intake of milk and dairy products during the pandemic. The consumption of meat and meat products during the pandemic was significantly less in 22% of the group (with a predominance of women 26% vs. men 18%) ($p < 0.01$). A significant increase occurred in egg consumption in 14.9% of those surveyed (with a 6.4% predominance in males) ($p < 0.05$). Spirits were consumed by 67% of the group during the pandemic, significantly more men drank alcohol than women (74.8% vs. 59.2%) ($p < 0.001$). A favourable finding was the increased consumption of fresh vegetables and fruits during the pandemic period, while an increase in salt consumption was an unfavorable observation. During the pandemic the largest increase in the use of nutritional supplements was in the use of vitamin D (57.9%) and vitamin C (47.9%). However, the majority of respondents chose not to take probiotics (65%).

Home isolation and lockdown resulted in a significant change in the nutritional behaviour of adults.

Key words: COVID-19 pandemic, Slovakia, Nutrition, Eating habits, Anthropometric parameters.