

The 13th European Nutrition Conference, FENS 2019, was held at the Dublin Convention Centre, 15–18 October 2019

The frequency of snacking and night-time eating habits in the adult obese patients

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Abstract

Introduction: Obesity is currently one of the world's most serious health problems and the number of obese people is constantly increasing. Unhealthy food habits, especially snacking and eating at night, result in increased energy intake and subsequently lead to weight gain. The aim of the study was to assess the frequency of snacking and night-time eating among obese patients.

Materials and Methods: The study involved 476 obese people. For all subjects, anthropometric measurements (body weight and height) were taken and the body mass index (BMI) was calculated. Blood tests were also performed, including total cholesterol and fasting glucose levels. Data concerning the age and detailed clinical history of each patient were collected from the medical records. Survey questionnaires were used to assess eating habits, including the prevalence of snacking and night-time eating.

Results: The patients' average age was 42.9 ± 11.9 and the BMI was in the range of 32.3–58.8. The majority of the participants (63%) had a BMI above 40 kg/m², 26% of them had a BMI in the range of 35–39.9 kg/m², and 11% of the subjects had class I obesity (BMI: 30.0–34.9 kg/m²). In the study group, 32% of the patients had type 2 diabetes, while 12% had pre-diabetes. In addition, 42% of the patients exhibited total cholesterol levels above 190 mg/dl and in the case of 52% of the patients, LDL cholesterol levels exceeded 115 mg/dl. The habit of snacking was characteristic for 89% of the respondents and 50% admitted to eating at night. Sweet foods were indicated as a snack of choice by 57% of the survey participants. A positive association between snacking and eating at night was also observed (OR = 11.55, 95% CI: 4.51–29.6 $p < 0.0001$).

Conclusions/Discussion: The study has demonstrated that snacking is very common among the surveyed obesity patients. What is more, it is often accompanied by night-time eating. The obtained results show how important it is to focus on actions aimed at helping the patients change their eating habits.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest