

# Lifestyle Pattern of medical students of a medical college in Lahore

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim:** To study the life style of students of Fatima Memorial medical college regarding the pattern of their sleep, study, physical activities, eating habits, psychological effects of stress and performance of religious obligations as well.

**Study design:** cross-sectional study

**Methods & Results:** Self-administered questionnaires were used which included questions about eating habits ,sleeping pattern, physical activities ,psychological factors ,study pattern etc. Out of all students participated in the study, 83% of students had healthy lifestyles whereas 17% did not. Overall response rate was 100%. All students completed the questionnaire .Data from 100 students was included in final analysis.

**Keywords:** Medical student, eating habits, sleeping habits

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## INTRODUCTION

The leading causes of global deaths today are largely lifestyle related<sup>1,2</sup>. A healthy lifestyle is an important predictor of future health, productivity and life expectancy. It has been found to reduce the factors which contribute to health risks. Global risks<sup>3,4</sup> for mortality are indicated as smoking and physical inactivity which are more common among students.

Most of the fatalities are linked closely to health-risk behaviors that are categorized in six areas: behaviors that contribute to unintentional and intentional injuries; tobacco use; alcohol and other drug use; sexual behaviors; unhealthy dietary behaviors; and physical inactivity. Health risks can be countered by a healthier lifestyle which includes regular physical activity, proper nutrition, elimination of unhealthy behaviors, having regular medical check-ups and maintaining good emotional health. Hence, it is logical to assume that most of these reported deaths could have been prevented through healthier lifestyles.

College life<sup>5,6</sup> is a period during which individuals are for the most part exposed to stress and lack of time, posing a barrier to adoption of healthy practices. In survey about habits and perceived barriers to following a healthy lifestyle in a college population (especially among medical students) the biggest deterrent to exercise and bad eating habits and absence of physical activities<sup>7,8</sup> is "lack of time".

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**Healthy lifestyle:** The WHO defines Health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not simply just the absence of disease. The actual definition of Healthy Living is the steps, actions and strategies one puts in place to achieve optimum health<sup>9</sup>.

**Life of a medical student:** Being a medical student will involve working harder than you've ever worked in your life – but chances are, it'll also involve having more fun than you've ever had before. There are plenty of off-putting myths about being a medical student, but in reality it's enjoyable, interesting and highly rewarding, especially in light of what you're working towards. In this article it's really all about getting the balance. Coming up to exams, it's easy to lock yourself in your 5 square meter bedroom and study like nuts to try and pass your exams, but really, it's best to study steadily throughout the year. So, as I say, some people study hard, some people hardly study, but it's important to notice if you're swaying one way or the other and try to stop it. If you're worried about having a social life when studying medicine, don't. I can assure you, you'll have plenty of opportunities to have a social life. In sports clubs especially, I've noticed it tends to be mostly medical students that make up the majority of the teams.. Another aspect of medical college I was not ready for was the complete shift in terms of academic examination and thinking. Whereas academic success in undergraduate studies often relied on rote memorization, medical schools place a great emphasis on the practical application of your knowledge. Maintaining a well-balanced diet as well as exercising regularly helped me balance and cope with the stress of studying in my life and helped me build confidence. Many medical students succumb to time constraints and pressure and neglect their own

well-being. This produces disastrous results. In order to be ready to take care of others, you must be sure that you have taken care of yourself (Param, 2013). For many students, the beginning of medical college feels like you got hit by a truck. Until now, you probably had no trouble sailing through classes, being involved on campus, and having an active social life. You imagine it will be similar in medical college. You may even have moved to a new city and are excited to explore the landscape and meet new people<sup>10</sup>.

Soon, however, you start to realize the amount of information you are expected to learn (a substantial portion of which will be self-taught), and you feel like there are not enough hours in the day. You hear rumors about students who may not make it through. Suddenly, you wonder if you will ever see the new city or friends outside the classroom or library<sup>11</sup>.

A meaningful life as learning something new every day, taking opportunities to make a difference and having fun with the people you work with. Medical school offers many opportunities to learn, but it's up to you to set priorities that allow you to get true meaning and joy out of your experience<sup>12</sup>.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive Cross-sectional study was conducted among 100 students of this medical college Lahore in July to study the lifestyle of students of medical college.

**Sample size estimation:**

- To estimate a proportion;
- Anticipated population proportion = 0.50%
- Confidence level= 95%
- Acceptable difference=0.1%

Required sample size was 97 but we took 100 students.

**Sampling technique:** Systematic random Sampling technique was used. Sampling frame of each class was obtained. So 20 students were selected from

each class, by selecting every 5<sup>th</sup> student and were then provided with questionnaire consisting of important demographic characteristics and various questions about lifestyle. During the whole survey the questionnaire was checked by supervisors from department of community medicine. The data was compiled and analyzed.

**Variables**

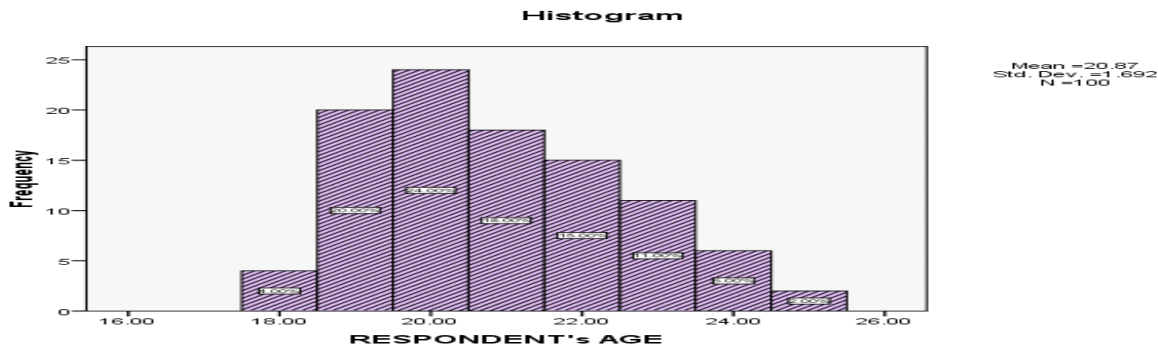
- demographic information
- dietary behaviors (food frequency, eating habits ,snacks, soda )
- physical activity
- time spent watching TV
- surfing net
- offering prayers
- sports activity etc

The details of the selected variables were analyzed in SPSS 16. The study generated statistics, frequency % were calculated and data was presented as frequency distribution tables and diagrams.

**RESULTS**

Out of 100 medical students (recruited for study) 55 were male and 45 female. Students were randomly taken from all 5 classes. 81% of students were between age group of 18-22 and 19% between 23-25. Minimum age among subjects was 18 and maximum was 25 years. Ages were normally distributed with mean 20.87 and SD±1.682

**Lifestyle habits:** In this study it was observed that 83% of students considered themselves healthy whereas 17% did not. Out of all respondents only 62% were taking fruits and vegetables regularly. 23% of students were taking large meals (means full meal) once a day, 60% twice a day and 17% thrice a day. Most of the respondents were taking Junk food (Burgers, Fried products) and snacks (samosa, pakora, sandwich, patties etc) in routine, in addition to daily regular meals.



14% of respondents were having 6-8 glasses of water daily, whereas 26% were having less than 6 glasses of water in a day. 34% of respondents eat more (increased hunger) during stress (emotional stress/ tension related to study). It was observed that 72% of respondents were not having any type of physical activity (sports/ exercise/ gym workout/walk), whereas 28% of them were doing physical activities (mainly sports, cricket, badminton/ jogging).

According to respondents 10% of them study in sitting position (reading books/related to their academic course and other) 6-7 hours in a day, 12% of them 5 to 6 hours, 24% of them 4 to 5 hours and rest for 2 to 3 hours. 32% of respondents have sleeping time of 6- 8 hours in a day, 14% have less than 6 hours and 54% had more than 8 hours. 94% of respondents did not smoke whereas 3% of respondents smoke up to 10 cigarettes and rest of 3% smoke even more. 42% of respondents were offering all five prayers regularly, whereas 10% were not offering prayers at all and rest were offering two, three or four prayers per day. 61% of respondents were having activities of "watching television or using internet or gaming on computer" for 1 to 2 hours, 26% of respondents for 2 to 6 hours, 7% of respondents for 6 to 8 hours and rest were spending even more time. Out of all the respondents 96% were following principles of personal hygiene like "daily bath/hand washing before and after meals/using tooth brush daily" mainly and most of them were doing that because they are all medical students.

## DISCUSSION

Results of study showed that the mean age of students was 20.87 years. Data was collected from 100 students, out of which 55 students were males and 45 were females. It was observed that out of all, 83% of students considered themselves healthy, although during research it was observed that most of them appear to be healthy. Majority were taking fruits and vegetables<sup>10</sup>.

Eating fast food and snacking (low nutritional food) indicates high caloric intake. Trend of junk food among respondents was also significant, 11% of individuals took junk food daily. Majority of respondents was not involved in some sort of physical activity. The daily recommendation of physical activity is at least 1 hour. Time spent while watching TV and using internet has displaced time for physical activities.

Lack of physical activity and increase trend of junk food and snacking<sup>11</sup> indicate that social and behavioral changes have changed the life style much. Smoking status of respondents indicated that

96% of them were non-smokers. Very low smoking status indicates that either they are aware of hazards of smoking or smoking is prohibited in the premises or at their homes. Also the sports activity among male and female students was significant. Female students were least involved in sports activities either due to lack of facilities or lack of interest.

Stress was also prevalent among respondents as many of them eat more during mental stress. So it is important to emphasize that Intervention should include both formal and informal education. Especially effective are purposive healthy lifestyle information, encouragement programs, which would embrace all society, where students live. Discussions with the respondents during the research also showed that the great majority perceives the importance of healthy lifestyle, however, it is not known whether they practice it or not. A proper co-ordination is necessary for this, medical, psychological and other help for students must be available. Various country researchers' accentuate the importance of Holistic approach, forming students' healthy lifestyle skills.

**Recommendations:** A healthy food with an ample amount of nutrients and a low amount of calories should be taken. Sports activities should be encouraged in college premises.

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