Meat Consumption Pattern among Students of Veterinary College and Research Institute, Tirunelveli

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted at the Veterinary College and Research Institute, Tirunelveli to study the meat consumption pattern among the students with a sample size of 295 respondents. Preference for red meat and white meat has more impact on the meat consumption pattern. As well as the age factor has a valuable influence on meat consumption patterns. Age of the students involved in the study was 17 yrs to 24 yrs old. The results revealed that the most preferred choice of meat was chicken (76.6%) followed by Chevon (11.2%) and mutton (9.5%). The frequency of meat consumption revealed that most of the students consume meat once a week (49.5%) followed by twice a week (25.1%). Most of the students (73.9%) were aware of processed meat with the choice of preference to consume (32.9%). Whereas 41.7% of the students did not prefer to consume processed meat products. 42.7% of students expressed their reason for meat consumption as taste (42.7%) followed by nutrition (42.4%).

Key Words: Consumption pattern, Meat, Meat Products, Processed meat, Students.

INTRODUCTION

Food of animal origin with protein contents is the first in the food chain in which meat occupies the major position (Chemnitz and Becheva, 2014). In India, the availability of meat is comparatively lower than in other developing countries. India is providing only about 15 g/person/day against the ICMR recommendation of 30 g/person/day in the year 2016 (Islam *et al,* 2016). Jackson *et al* (2016) reported that there was a promising relationship between meat intake and iron status. The production and consumption data are tremendously increasing even though traditions and culture influence meat consumption to a great extent in India.

Culture, traditions, customs, taboos and finally the quality of the available meat products influence the consumption pattern of meat and meat products, in all levels of Indian society. Nutritional, functional and hygienic attributes of available market meat products determine its acceptability. Therefore, maintaining the optimum quality of meat products should always be the priority of both processors and retailers engaged in the meat business. Structured information on meat consumption patterns and existing market meat products quality in a particular area is very much necessary to develop future strategies for face lifting of meat processing industries in that area because in the present world, the supply of quality food to the consumer in its safest form is the biggest challenge to the food processors (Talukder and Mendiratta, 2017). Meat is the most important food commodity of animal origin food. It contains quality protein, tastiness enhancing fat, energy providing carbohydrates, vitamins as well as essential fatty acids and micronutrients which make it a balanced diet for most people in all age groups (Sharma *et al,* 2018). Meat is a good source of energy and some essential nutrients including protein and micronutrients such as iron, zinc, and

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Table 1. Demographic information of the students/ respondents.

Particular	Frequency (n=295)	Percentage %
Age (Year)		
17	16	5.4
18	68	23.1
19	59	20.0
20	32	10.8
21	25	8.4
22	54	18.3
23	38	12.9
24	3	1.0
Sex		
Female	188	63.7
Male	107	36.3
Family size		
<5	200	67.8
5	69	23.4
>5	26	8.8
Family Income		
50,000-1,00,000	158	53.6
1,00,000-2,00,000	44	14.9
>2,00,000	93	31.5

vitamin B12—although it is possible to obtain a sufficient intake of these nutrients without eating meat if a wide variety of other foods is available and consumed (Godfray *et al,* 2018).

The majority of meats consumed in India are chicken, chevon, mutton, pork and beef. In the Indian context, culture, traditions, customs, and religious taboos influence meat consumption to a great extent (Devi *et al,* 2014). However, urbanization and globalization have an impact over lifestyle as well as food habits. The consumption pattern of livestock products like meat and meat products has changed a lot with the purchasing power and availability of a variety of meat products. In earlier days the price of meat and meat products were a major concern, but in recent days many factors like age, sex, family size and income are involved in the expenditure on meat and meat products.

Generally, the food consumption pattern changes among the sex. Men consume heavily food than women. Likewise, the preference for meat, place of meat and meat products consumption, and place of meat purchase is also varying depends upon the generation or age factor. During this period, young people love to eat at fast foods, street foods and restaurants whereas old age people always prefer homemade foods. These kinds of factors influence the meat consumption pattern among people. The knowledge about food demand and consumer behaviour towards food is essential for finding answers to various policy development issues like improvement in nutritional status, food subsidy, and sectoral, etc. Therefore, to assess the food security-related policy issues an analysis of food consumption patterns and how these patterns are likely to shift due to changes in income and relative prices are required (Mittal, 2020**)**. Hence, this study was planned to get data on meat consumption patterns among the students, so that the choice of preference of meat and more information regarding meat consumption will be obtained to determine the meat consumption pattern.

Table 2. Data on meat consumption pattern.

Type of meat	Frequency (n=295)	Percentage (%)
Preference of meat		
Beef	8	2.7
Chevon	33	11.2
Chicken	226	76.6
Mutton	28	9.5
Pork	-	-
Frequency of meat consumption		
Frequency	**Frequency (n=295)**	**Percentage (%)**
Daily	7	2.3
Weekly once	146	49.5
Weekly twice	74	25.1
Monthly once	68	23.1
Awareness on processed meat		
Choices	**Frequency (n=295)**	**Percentage (%)**
Yes	218	73.9
No	77	26.1
Opinion on processed meat consumption		
Choices	**Frequency (n=295)**	**Percentage (%)**
Preferred	97	32.9
Not Preferred	123	41.7
No idea	75	25.4
Reason for meat consumption		
Reason	Frequency (n=295)	Percentage (%)
Cheap	-	-
Forced (by parents)	11	3.7
Habituated	33	11.2
Nutrition	125	42.4
Taste	126	42.7
Family annual income		
Annual Income	**Frequency (n=295)**	**Percentage (%)**
50,000-1,00,000	158	53.6
1,00,000-2,00,000	44	14.9
>2,00,000	93	31.5

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted as a pilot study among the students of Veterinary College and Research Institute, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu using exploratory research design in the year 2023. 295 respondents were involved in this study to provide basic information on meat consumption pattern and their preference towards meat and meat products through the Google Forms platform. The responses have been collected from first year to final year students. The obtained results were subjected to statistical analysis. The least significant differences were calculated at the appropriate level of significance following analysis of variance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic information of the students is presented in Table 1. A collective of questions were asked through google forms to every individual. The data were presented by frequency and percentage in table 2.

The results of the demographic information showed that the age group involved in this study was 17-24 years old. The age is the important factor in the meat consumption pattern determination since, the choice of meat and amount of meat consumption influences the data predominantly. The female respondents were 63.7% and male respondents were 36.3%. The sex factor was also influencing the meat consumption pattern mainly by the choice of preference of meat. 67.8% of the respondents were from the family size of less than 5 members. The frequency of meat consumption and different types of meat consumption was more in small size families when compared to large size families. Most of the respondent's family annual income was less than 1 lakh (53.6%) followed by more than 2 lakh (31.5%) and between 1-2 lakh (14.9%). The purpose of this question was to acquire the data on the influence of status on meat consumption pattern. In that aspect, Akinwumi *et al,* (2011) indicated that cost, availability, and income have the most limiting factors of meat preference.

The meat consumption pattern of the students is given in Table 2. It revealed that most of the respondents were preferred chicken meat (76.6%) when compared to chevon (11.2%), mutton (9.5%), beef (2.7%) and pig (0%). This trend was in line with Priyadharsini *et al* (2016); Desilva *et al* (2010); Teklebrhan (2013); Srinivasa *et al* (2010); Babu *et al* (2010). They also indicated in their study that, most of the respondents preferred chicken (50%) followed by chevon (40%) and least preference was given to mutton and seafoods (5%). None of the respondents preferred pork and beef. The less preference over the beef and pig meat is may be due to the religious taboos.

The frequency of meat consumption was reported mostly as weekly once (49.5%) followed by weekly twice (25.1%), monthly once (23.1%) and daily (2.3%). This was mainly based on the economic status as well as the interest in having nonveg for its taste. The awareness about processed meat and meat products was comparatively high with the results of 73.9% of respondents having knowledge and exposure to processed meat and meat products. Whereas, the preference towards processed meat and meat products was comparatively less. Around 41.7 % of the respondents have not preferred processed meat foods whereas 32.9% of the respondents were the choice of preference on processed meat products. This result was in agreement with Tzimithra (1997). Kiran *et al* (2018) also observed that consumer awareness about frozen meat was very low compared to fresh meat in Southern India. The lack of awareness and interest in processed meat was mainly due to the unavailability of processed meat. The results of reasons for meat consumption were mainly by taste (42.7%) followed by nutrition (42.4%), habituation (11.2%) and forced by parents (3.7%). Even though the students are well knowledgeable in the nutritional status of the meat, as a human being the taste plays a major role. As per the statement revealed based on the milk consumption pattern study of Ahuja and Sharma (2014) it could be possible to consume meat and meat products only when the price of livestock products is low.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the students consume meat and meat products a maximum of once a week. Even though they have accessibility to nearby restaurants/ fast food outlets apart from the hostel mess, the frequency of meat consumption is comparatively very less due to the cost of meat and meat products. Hence, it was found that cost is the major factor that influences the meat consumption pattern among students of Veterinary college and research institute.

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