

# BREAKFAST EATING PRACTICES AMONG DOCTORS OF ISLAMABD, RAWALPINDI AND CHAKWAL IN RELATION TO THEIR NUTRITIONAL STATUS

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## ABSTRACT

*The objective of the study was to find out the breakfast eating habits and the effects of these habits on their health among doctors of Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Chakwal working in public and private hospitals. For the current study it was hypothesized that "Regular breakfast eating is associated with lower BMI". 351 Health professionals (Doctors) working in Health institutions or doing private practice in Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Chakwal were included in the study over six months from April 2011 till August 2011. All relevant information about diet, along with height (using stadiometer, or measuring tape), weight (by bathroom weight scale) was recorded. With the help of height and weight, BMI was calculated. Based on BMI, nutritional status of the subjects was assessed. Descriptive analysis showed that mean height was 163.42±8.82 cm with a range of 147.5 to 187.5 cm and the mean weight was 65±12.1 kg with a range of 38 kg to 103 kg. BMI ranged from 14.47 to 40.57, with a mean BMI of 24.22±3.55. 202 (57.5%) doctors were regular breakfast eaters (RBE) and 149 (42.5%) were breakfast skippers. The mean BMI of regular breakfast eaters was 23.11±3.56 kg and of breakfast skippers was 25.72±2.9 kg ( $p = 0.00$ ). It was concluded that the regular breakfast eating is associated with lower BMI.*

**Key Words:** BMI, Breakfast eating habits, doctors, lifestyle.

## INTRODUCTION

In Pakistan due to the hectic routine of doctors and heavy workload of patients very less time is left for doctors to address their personal needs. Doctors specifically don't give importance to breakfast in time of rush in the morning and day break but it adversely affect their fitness and well-being as well as BMI. Regarding their nutritional status and lifestyles, authentic data is not available. For that reason this study will offer base line information/data to doctors to advance their knowledge and understanding about the significance of breakfast. Whereas current research offers data of many factors that are related with skipping breakfast and may be predictive of it, furthermore, research on the adult population has been a particularly neglected area of investigation.

## METHODOLOGY

The objective of the study was to find out the

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**Received for Publication:** May 5, 2015  
**First Revision:** August 1, 2015  
**Second Revision:** August 7, 2015  
**Approved:** August 8, 2015

breakfast eating habits among health professionals of Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Chakwal working in public and private hospitals and to find out the effect of these habits on their health. It was hypothesized that there is an association between breakfast eating practices and BMI. 351 doctors working in health institutions or doing private practice in Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Chakwal formed the study group. This study was a questionnaire based survey. For that purpose the research was conducted in two steps. Step 1 consisted of item generation and determination of face validity and categorization of items by judges. Step 2 consisted of administration of the survey questionnaire on a sample of doctors. The three instruments (Demographic Information sheet, consent form and questionnaire-Final) were presented in the form of a booklet. Demographic Information sheet formed the first instrument of this booklet. Then, the consent form asking the consent of the individuals to participate in the research and describing the purpose of the research was attached. Finally, the questionnaire-Final formed the part of the booklet. Instructions for the completion of the instruments were given on the front page of each scale.

## RESULTS

202 (57.5%) doctors were regular breakfast consumption (RBE) and 149 (42.5%) did not take breakfast regularly. Out of 351 doctors 225 (64.1%) were either underweight or normal weight and 126 (35.9%) were

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC RESULTS OF THE STUDY SAMPLE (N=351)

Males n	Females n	BMI Mean
110 (31.3%)	241 (68.7%)	24.22±3.55

TABLE 2: COMPARISON OF THE MEAN AGE OF BREAKFAST EATERS AND NON-BREAKFAST EATERS (N=351)

Breakfast eaters Mean age (years)	Non-Breakfast eaters Mean age (years)
30.51±7.11	29.63±5.36

TABLE 3: CHANGE IN WEIGHT NOTICED BY BREAKFAST SKIPPERS (N=149)

Did not respond	Answered "yes"	Answered "no"
49 (33%)	60 (40.3%)	40 (26.8%)

TABLE 4: TYPE OF CHANGE IN WEIGHT NOTICED BY BREAKFAST SKIPPERS (N=149)

Did not respond	Noticed an increase in weight	Noticed a decrease in weight	Noticed no change in weight
81 (54.4%)	44 (29.5%)	13 (8.7%)	11 (7.4%)

TABLE 5: CHANGE IN WEIGHT NOTICED BY BREAKFAST EATERS (N=202)

Did not respond	Answered "yes"	Answered "no"
93 (46%)	37 (18.3%)	72 (35.7%)

TABLE 6: TYPE OF CHANGE IN WEIGHT NOTICED BY BREAKFAST EATERS (N=202)

Did not respond	Noticed an increase in weight	Noticed a decrease in weight	Noticed no change in weight
123(60.9%)	32 (15.8%)	7 (3.5%)	40 (19.8%)

TABLE 7: COMPARISON OF MEAN BMI OF REGULAR BREAKFAST EATERS AND BREAKFAST SKIPPERS (N=351)

Breakfast eaters Mean BMI	Non-Breakfast eaters Mean BMI
23.11±3.56 kg	25.72±2.9 kg

either overweight or obese. 6 (1.7%) were underweight, 219 (62.4%) were normal weight, 108 (30.8%) were overweight, 13 (3.7%) had Class I, 4 (1.1%) had Class II obesity and 1 (0.3%) had Class III obesity. BMI ranged

from 14.47 to 40.57, with a mean BMI of 24.22±3.55. The demographic results of the study sample are as follows.

68 (33.7%) male doctors and 134 (66.3%) female doctors were regular breakfast eaters. The mean age of the breakfast eaters was 30.51±7.11 years and the mean age of non-breakfast eaters was 29.63±5.36 years. 149 breakfast skippers were questioned whether they had noticed any change in weight if they had started skipping breakfast recently; When questioned from breakfast skippers about the type of change in weight they had noticed they responded as follows; The 202 breakfast eaters were questioned whether they had noticed any change in weight if they had started taking breakfast recently.

When questioned from breakfast eaters about what type of change in weight they had noticed they responded as follows; The mean BMI of regular breakfast eaters was 23.11±3.56 kg and of breakfast skippers was 25.72±2.9 kg; the two groups had statistically significant difference in their mean BMI;  $p = 0.00$ .

## DISCUSSION

A study by Szajewska and Ruszczynski (2010) suggest that breakfast consumption protects against obesity and becoming overweight. Moreover in a study by Horikawa, Kodama, Yachi, Heianza, Hirasawa, Ibe, Saito, Shimano, Yamada and Sone (2011) to seek breakfast taking and its effects on weight, a meta-analysis of nineteen studies, 108 participants and 19,270 plump cases was done. It suggests that a significant positive association between skipping breakfast and becoming overweight is globally observed regardless of the cultural diversity among countries. The implication of the study results is significant in the aspect that it suggests beneficial to promote eating breakfast in all countries. The current study contributes to the literature on the impact of breakfast eating/skipping among Pakistani doctors in that (a) it shows that a high proportion of doctors skip breakfast (b) skipping breakfast is significantly associated with higher BMI i.e. higher weight status with relative height as compared to breakfast eaters. It is consistent to the research findings done by the professionals (Sajjad, Anwar, Anwar, Zaidi & Hassan, 2014) in collaboration which is evidence for that the effects go wider and breakfast skipping is strongly associated with an increased prevalence of weight gain, increase BMI and obesity.

In Pakistan Mahmood, Perveen, Najjad, Yousuf, Ahmed and Ali (2013) studied overweight and obesity among 428 medical students in public sector institutes of Karachi and found prevalence of being overweight to be 14.75% and obesity to be 12.4% respectively. Among boys it was 47.7% and among girls it was 15.9%.

Factors associated with overweight and obesity among medical students were found to be lunch taking from outside home, irregular snack taking between meals and tea taking practice. The implications of this study is that the statistical evidence provided on the fact that incidence of overweight and obesity is high amongst medical students in our sample population and targeted efforts are required to sustain obesity related morbidity factors.

This study results can make aware the doctors about maintaining better breakfast taking habit for the sake of better weight status and healthy life. The limitation of this study is that it did not explore the content or quality of breakfast.

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