
STUDY OF WELL BEING OF URBAN WOMEN**DR. KANCHAN CHITNIS, NKITA PATIL, ASMITA PATIL**

Abstract: The current study is a survey of urban youth, specifically college going female students to know about their well being. It is aimed at understanding their health profile in general, their fertility status, their social and family life, their psychological behavior and their attitude towards life. 33 female students of Ramnarain Ruia College, Mumbai, were included in the study. The sample had a normal BMI and waist: hip ratio. The main indicator of good health of a female is her menstrual cycle, which was found to be very normal of around 29 days. That most of the students skip breakfast was not a healthy sign in the long run. All of them wanted to take up a job as well as be engaged in some kind of social work. Psychologically, they all appeared to be extremely sound with the adjustment inventory score being extremely low. Also the daily hassle index was very low. They were not irritated with petty matters. In future, data can be collected from students of successive years. This data can be compared to find the trend in health profile, fertility status, psychological behaviour, preferences in diet and exercise regimen amongst urban youth. Thus we will be able to define the changes occurring in the society as a whole. Also each individual can be given personalized attention if need be. This kind of screening can be made a regular practice at entry level for students.

Keywords: Well being, urban women, health profile, fertility status, psychological behavior.

Introduction: Waking up to reading in the newspapers about the increasing cases of depression and resulting increase in incidents of suicides among the students, forces one to question oneself as to do we know our students well? Are they physically and mentally strong to take up the challenges in life? There is also the negative impact on them about the changing environmental factors, cut throat competition, limited resources, pressure to do well in life and come out successful. Also the students appear to be quite confident when in a group, but we need to delve into the realms of their psyche to understand their individual well being.

These and many such questions prompted us to take up this study.

Aims and Objectives: The current study is a survey of urban youth, specifically college going female students to know about their well being. It is aimed at understanding their health profile in general, their fertility status, their social and family life, their psychological behavior and their attitude towards life. This study can be taken up as a screening test to find out the need for counseling for any student.

Methods and Materials: 45 female students of second year of graduation of Ramnarain Ruia College, Mumbai, were included in the study, by their own free will. Mumbai is a cosmopolitan city, it has a vast multicultural background and hence even if students are surveyed from the same class, they offer a heterogeneous sample of the population. They were given an open ended questionnaire to fill. The questions were divided into following heads; General Information, Health Profile, Fertility Status, Diet and Exercise, Allergies and Medical Details, Family History, Social and Family Life and Psychological

Behavior. (Appendix 1)

Results: Of the 45 students 33 students completely filled and returned the forms. The results obtained were as follows; 43% were of O blood group and 5% were of AB blood group. The mean body mass index was found to be 21.05 ± 3.95 (normal range is 18.5-24.9) [1]. The mean Waist: Hip ratio was found to be 0.863 ± 0.04 (normal range is 0.75-0.85). 61 % of the students did not take any form of health supplements. Only 8% and 9% took iron tablets and B complex tablets respectively.

The mean age of first menstrual period was 13.04 ± 0.94 years, with the menstrual cycle being of 29.43 ± 1.95 days. Most of them had regular periods, with symptoms ranging maximally from stomach ache to headache, fatigue and body ache. 72% of students did not have regular breakfast in the morning. Around 82% students either watched TV, or read books or used mobile phones while eating. Only 8% preferred to have aerated drinks, rest others had a healthy preference of juice, coffee or milk. 66% students exercised regularly. 67% slept for 5-7 hrs and 33 % slept for 7-8 hrs.

Surprisingly 70% students had allergies from various factors like smoke, dust, metals, chemicals, foodstuffs like pork, tamarind, groundnut etc. 72% students had no diseases or disorders in family history. They came from healthy background. The rest had a history of mainly diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol levels. Almost all of them were happy with the course that they had taken for graduation and they were interested in taking up a job later. 40% opted for research as chosen field for further life. But 21% were clueless and undecided on what they would like to do after graduation.

Almost all of them would like to do social work and help the needy. All of them felt the support of their family, friends and teachers. 90% of students had a healthy discussion on different social and career issues within their family. But they confided about their difficulties with mother as first choice for 27% of students, God as first choice for 24% students, and 40% of them confided with friends as first choice. 90% felt the pressure to do well in life and the pressure mostly came from self, then from family. 33% had fear in their minds regarding fear of losing family, facing people with different approach, loneliness, career misguidance, elevators and exams.

The mean adjustment factor was 11.73+ 5.77. (Score below 25 is normal, 25-35 is moderate maladjustment, 36-42 is severe maladjustment) The daily hassle index was 106.96+ 33.86.(score up to 190 is stress free, 190-240 is mild stress, 240-260 is moderately stressed, 260-290 severely stressed)

Discussion: The sample had a normal BMI and normal waist: hip ratio. The main indicator of good health of a female is her menstrual cycle [4], which in the sample was found to be very normal of around 29 days. That most of the students skip breakfast is not a healthy sign in the long run. Moreover they are indulging in bad habit of not concentrating on food while eating. Interestingly all of them want to take up a job and be engaged in some kind of social work as well. This is very encouraging and puts to rest all our doubts about today's generation being selfish. They are aware of the social challenges and have a discussion with their family members regarding the

same. They appear to be very responsible as most of them feel the pressure to do well in life and be successful. This pressure very importantly comes from self realization and very rarely from family. Most of them are fearless and take life as it comes, but some of them fear for the uncertainties of life namely loss of family and loneliness. Psychologically, they all appear to be extremely sound with the adjustment inventory score being very normal. Also the daily hassle index is very low. They are stress free and show an inclination to adjust to vagaries of life.

Conclusion: Almost all the female students in the study group seem to be very responsible and those who take their lives very seriously. They have very healthy preferences and are prepared to face the challenges in life upfront. They are aware of their social responsibilities and also towards their family. Looking at their psychological frame work, they will definitely be an asset when they take up jobs and integrate with the society in a larger perspective.

Future Scope: Data can be collected from students of successive years. This data can be compared to find the trend in health profile, fertility status, psychological behavior, preferences in diet and exercise regimen amongst urban youth. Thus we will be able to define the changes occurring in the society as a whole. Also each individual can be given personalized attention if need be. This kind of a study can be used as an initial screening test at entry level for all students as a regular practice, which can help detect any case requiring counseling, early on.

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Dr. Kanchan Chitnis/ Assistant Professor/ Department of Life Science/ Ramnarain Ruia College/L.N.Nappoo Road/Matunga/ Mumbai/ 400019. kanchanchitnis@gmail.com

Ms. Ankita Patil/Undergraduate Student of Life Science/
Ramnarain Ruia College/ankitapatil2112@gmail.com

Ms. Asmita Patil/Undergraduate Student of Life Science/
Ramnarain Ruia College/asmitapatil115@gmail.com

Appendix: Questionnaire.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire; A) GENERAL INFORMATION

Name: _____ Class: _____ Subject: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Age: _____ yrs Blood Group: _____ Rh: _____

Have you participated in such a survey before? Yes _____ no _____

B) HEALTH PROFILE

Height (in cms): _____ Weight: _____ kg BMI: _____ Haemoglobin count: _____

waist : _____ cm hip: _____ cm waist: hip ratio _____

Do you wear spectacles? Yes/ no _____ or lenses? Yes/no _____

If yes, specify the number. _____ At what age did you start wearing them? _____

C) FERTILITY STATUS

At what age did the first menstrual period occur? _____ yrs

Any symptoms: yes/no: headache _____ body ache _____ fatigue _____

Stomach ache _____ disturbance in sleep pattern _____ Any other, specify _____

Menstrual cycle in days _____ Is it regular? Yes _____ / No _____

Any use of medication related to periods: yes/no _____ Nature of medication used: _____

Sometimes: _____ often: _____ rarely: _____

D) DIET AND EXERCISE

Diet: _____ Vegetarian _____ Non Vegetarian _____ both _____

Do you have regular meal times? _____ Do you skip meals? _____

Do you watch TV/ read books/ use your phone while eating? _____

Do you have a heavy breakfast daily? _____

What is your beverage of choice? Water, Milk, Fruit juices, Aerated drinks, Coffee/tea, Other

Do you consume health supplements/ tonics? yes _____ no _____

If yes specify: Bournvita/Complan etc _____ B complex/Calcium/Iron tablets _____ Any other _____

Do you exercise? _____ If yes how many times a week? _____

Mode of exercise: Brisk walk, Gym, Sports, Yoga, Any other form: _____

When exercising, how many hours do you spend? Less than an hour, 1-3 hours, 4 or more How many hours do you sleep daily? Upto 5 hrs, 5-7 hrs, 8-10 hrs, 10+

Do you stay awake late at night? _____

E) ALLERGIES AND MEDICAL

Any allergy from Environmental allergens (namely): _____ Foodstuffs (namely): _____

Chemicals (namely): _____ Any other: _____

If allergic then how does your body alert you to the allergic reaction?

Breathing problems, Sneezing, Skin irritation/itching, Rash, Watery eyes, Fatigue, Any other

At what age did your body show allergic reaction? _____

Use of medication: Ayurvedic, Allopathic, Homeopathic, No medicine, just avoidance of allergen,

Any other: _____

Do you suffer from any disease or disorder? Yes/ No; if yes; specify _____, since when _____ Any medication for the same _____

Family history: Does any of your family members have an allergy? _____

Is it the same allergy? If not then which allergy? _____

Do you have a family history of any illness? If yes, specify _____

F) SOCIAL AND FAMILY

Are you happy with the courses that you have joined? Yes _____ no _____

Would you like to take up a job? Yes _____ no _____

What would be your aspired area of work? _____

Would you like to do something for the society? Yes _____ no _____

Are you already doing any social work? Yes _____ no _____ If yes, specify: _____

Do you feel the support of your family? yes _____ No _____

Do you feel the support of your friends? yes _____ No _____

Do you feel the support of your teachers? yes _____ No _____

Do you engage in shared activities /get-togethers with friends/relatives?

With Friends- Often/frequently, Sometimes, Hardly

With Relatives- Often/frequently, Sometimes, Hardly

Is there a discussion with parents regarding the prevalent societal conditions, anti-social behaviour etc.? Yes / No

Whom do you confide in (whom do you tell all secrets, worries, thoughts)? please put in sequence of preference if you have more than one choice: 1) Friends 2) Mother 3) Father 4) Brother 5) Sister

6) Teachers 7) None 8) God

1)_____ 2)_____ 3)_____ 4)_____ 5)_____ 6)_____ 7)_____ 8)_____

Do you feel the pressure to do your best? Yes___ no_____

Where does it come from? Family___teachers___ friends___ seniors___self_____

Do you fear anything? Yes___ no_____If yes specify_____

G) ADJUSTMENT INVENTORY: Please circle for yes or no according to your answer. You are required to answer all questions.[2,3]

1. Do you have a sense of fear or nervousness while making a speech or discussion?
2. Do you feel difficulty in talking to a stranger?
3. Do you remain hurt for a long time on being insulted?
4. Do you feel loneliness even when you are in the company of others?
5. Do you look upon yourself as a person who is easily excited by ideas?
6. Are your feelings easily injured?
7. Do you lag behind others in submission of assignments etc?
8. Is your mind so much haunted by thoughts that you cannot go to bed?
9. Are you troubled by memories of your past errors?
10. Are you worried about the difficulties you may face in the time to come?
11. Do your moods of joy and sorrow change without any reason?
12. Are you troubled by shyness?
13. Do you often build castles in the air? (ie day dreaming)
14. Do you easily lose courage?
15. Do your interests change often?
16. Are you troubled by the thing that others are watching you when you are at work?
17. Can you hear about your defects without being hurt?
18. Do experience difficulty in making friends?
19. Does your mind often wander so much that you are not aware of what you are doing?
20. Have you felt very sad on securing fewer marks?
21. Do you hate many things?
22. Do you often curse your luck?
23. Do you often become self-conscious in your class?
24. Do you often find yourself worried?
25. Do you often feel lazy and worn out?
26. Do you have very little self confidence?
27. Are you comfortable with your appearance?
28. Do you run to help others on seeing an accident?
29. Do you feel that you should improve in your work?
30. Are you troubled by the thought of smallness/ inferiority?
31. Are you not able to make up your mind, and the time to do that thing passes?
32. Do you usually have confidence in your ability?

H) DAILY HASSLE INDEX: Below is a list of daily hassles that commonly irritate college students. Please indicate how often each one is an irritation to you. Use numbers as below;

0; almost never an irritation to me

5; sometimes an irritation to me

10; frequently an irritation to me [2,3]

1) Library too noisy _____

2) Too little time_____

3) Too little money_____

4) Deciding what to wear _____

5) Books unavailable in library_____

- 6) Getting up in the morning_____
- 7) My weight_____
- 8) No enough time to exercise_____
- 9) Noisy neighbours_____
- 10) Conflicts with classmates_____
- 11) Teacher not available_____
- 12) Not enough close friends_____
- 13) Not enough time to talk to friends_____
- 14) Weather temperatures _____
- 15) How I look_____
- 16) Other students are unfriendly_____
- 17) Getting to class on time_____
- 18) Future plans_____
- 19) Tensions in love relationship_____
- 20) Conflicts with family_____
- 21) Too much crowd_____
- 22) Missing my family_____
- 23) Being lonely_____
- 24) Being unorganized_____
- 25) Others` opinions of me_____
- 26) Too little sleep_____
- 27) Taking tests_____
- 28) Household chores_____
- 29) Fixing hair in the morning_____
