

Nutritional Knowledge and Perception of 100 Level Nursing Students on Nutrition during their First Six Months at Oyo State College of Nursing and Midwifery, Eleyele Ibadan

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Abstract

Adequate nutritional knowledge and positive dietary practices are foundational to the professional competence of nursing students, who are anticipated to serve as health educators and role models for public health promotion. Yet, the transition into collegiate academic environments frequently disrupts established dietary behaviors, creating a knowledge-practice gap with implications for both student well-being and future patient care. Objective: This study aimed to assess nutritional knowledge, dietary perceptions, and the determinants of dietary choices among first-year nursing students within their initial six months of enrollment at Oyo State College of Nursing and Midwifery, Eleyele, Ibadan, Nigeria. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was employed. Using purposive sampling, structured, self-administered questionnaires were distributed to all 246 students admitted into the inaugural cohort of the academic year, yielding a total enumeration sample. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with frequencies and percentages reported for categorical variables. The majority of respondents ($n = 246$; 82.9% female; mean age below 20 years) demonstrated high baseline nutritional knowledge, with 99.6% correctly defining nutrition and 98.8% identifying the characteristics of a balanced diet. Notwithstanding, significant knowledge gaps were observed in areas of micronutrient biosynthesis, with only 51.6% correctly identifying that micronutrients are not endogenously produced. Dietary perceptions were largely favorable, with 98.8% affirming the necessity of a healthy diet and 95.1% endorsing daily consumption of fruits and vegetables. Despite these attitudes, dietary practices were constrained by food cost 98.8%, food availability 93.1%, time limitations, and sociocultural influences. A discernible knowledge-attitude-practice (KAP) gap was identified among first-year nursing students at this institution. While nutritional knowledge and perceptions were largely positive, structural and contextual barriers impeded the translation of these attitudes into healthy dietary behaviors. Findings underscore the need for curriculum-integrated nutrition education, institution-level dietary support structures, and targeted policy interventions to bridge the KAP gap and foster lifelong healthy dietary conduct among nursing students.

Keywords: Nutritional Knowledge, Dietary Perception, Nursing Students, Knowledge-Attitude-Practice Gap, Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nursing is a lifesaving profession and nurses occupy a critical role in the healthcare system. Being the most significant component of healthcare delivery, the nursing profession not only deals with an individual's life but helps in maintaining good quality of life in a family as well as a community (Rujuta et al., 2019). Nursing students, generally between the age group of 17 and 22 years, come

in the category of adolescent and young adults (WHO, 2018). As of March 2020, the nurse-to-patient ratio in Nigeria was 1:1135, which translated to 88.1 nurses per 100,000 persons (Chiedozie, 2021), compared with 1 for every 150–200 in developed and richer countries (Rujuta et al., 2019). Nursing profession has excessive arduous duties and tasks which need complete dedication and high incidence of ailments among the nurses will result in partial and limited dedication to work.

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Adolescence is the phase of life between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10 to 19. It is a unique stage of human development and an important time for laying the foundations of good health. Adolescents experience rapid physical, cognitive and psychosocial growth. This affects how they feel, think, make decisions, and interact with the world around them (WHO, 2018). It is thought of as a healthy stage of life, there is significant death, illness and injury in the adolescent years. Much of this is preventable or treatable. During this phase, adolescents establish patterns of behaviour – for instance, related to diet, physical activity, substance use, and sexual activity – that can protect their health and the health of others around them, or put their health at risk now and in the future. Young adults contribute to a major component of professional health services. The health of these young people is closely linked to the lifestyle they choose to adopt, (Rujuta et al., 2019) which also affects their nutritional status and so must be evaluated critically as malnutrition is a significant public health problem in low-to-medium income countries like Nigeria (Alamu, Eyinla, Sanusi & Maziya-Dixon, 2020).

Nutrition is vital to growth and development, more so WHO noted that nutrition is a critical part of health and development (WHO, 2022). Nutrition and hydration are both basic elements for life maintenance and are devised as signs of health in our society (Henry, 2017). Recent studies have shown that undergraduate students, especially in health-related fields, are at risk of poor dietary habits due to academic pressure, time constraints, and lifestyle changes during school transitions (Tetteh et al., 2023). Students tend to skip meals, consume high-calorie fast food, and exhibit low fruit and vegetable intake, which compromises nutritional adequacy (Ajayi & Ogunleye, 2022). These behaviors are concerning in the Nigerian context, where the double burden of malnutrition undernutrition and obesity is prevalent among young populations, including university students (Uwakwe & Adebayo, 2021). In the case of nursing students, who are expected to be role models of healthy living, nutrition knowledge is critically important. Adequate understanding of the six basic nutrients, dietary requirements, and the impact of poor nutrition on health outcomes enhances their capacity to educate patients effectively (Salami & Okon, 2024). It is alarming that even among health students, misconceptions persist. For example, many students still misinterpret the role of micronutrients and overestimate the benefits of meal skipping or junk food consumption (Ojo et al., 2023).

Several determinants influence students' nutritional behavior. Cost, availability, and accessibility of food items are primary factors, particularly in urban institutions where inflation and economic constraints are high (Onuoha & Okeowo, 2023). Cultural factors also shape food choices, as certain diets may be promoted or restricted based on family or religious beliefs (Yusuf & Nwaogu, 2021). Individual preferences, taste, peer

influence, and media exposure have been shown to significantly affect students' dietary practices (Bamidele et al., 2022). Importantly, the academic environment plays a role in reinforcing nutritional habits. Institutions that incorporate nutrition education into their curriculum and provide supportive environments, such as healthy canteens and flexible meal times, contribute positively to students' health (Edewor & Oladokun, 2022). In Nigeria, the integration of nutritional awareness into nursing education has been recommended as a sustainable approach to empower future healthcare providers with practical knowledge and healthy attitudes (Balogun & Okafor, 2023).

Every nurse was once a student and during the academic phase, a lot of factors can affect their academic performance. Some of the factors are health and lifestyle-related. Health problems such as vision and oral health problems, asthma, teenage pregnancy, malnutrition, obesity, chronic stress and inattention and hyperactivity disorders and risk-taking behaviour such as aggression and violence, unsafe sexual activity, unhealthy eating, physical inactivity and substance use are associated with low scholastic performance (Matingwina, 2018).

It is observed among the students that there is incessant sickness and undue stress which can be associated to the feeding pattern of the students. It is for this reason that the study wants to take a look at the perception of the 100 Level Nursing Students on Nutrition during their First Six Months at Oyo State College of Nursing and Midwifery, Eleyele Ibadan.

➤ *Research Questions*

- What do the students know about nutrition?
- What are their perception on nutrition

➤ *Research Objectives*

- To determine their knowledge on nutrition
- To determine their attitude toward nutrition
- To identify factors influencing their nutrition

II. METHODOLOGY

➤ *Setting and Participants*

A descriptive study was conducted, with purposive sampling techniques employed and 246 questionnaires were administered. 246 students were selected because that is the number of students that were admitted into the college and are in their first year of course of study and are just spending six months in the college. The questionnaires will be distributed to the student to fill. The researcher explained the reasons for the study to the student and their consent were sought before administering the questionnaire on them.

III. RESULTS

The results were drawn from the administered questionnaire which was done on the new student admitted to the college.

➤ Socio-Demographic Details

Table 1 Showing Socio-Demographic Details of the Respondents N = 246 % = 100.0

Item	Variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	42	17.1
	Female	204	82.9
Age	Below 20 years	176	71.5
	21-30 years	60	24.4
	31-40 years	10	4.0
Marital status	Married	20	12.2
	Single	216	87.8
Program	Basic Nursing	189	76.8
	Community Nursing	5	2.1
	Basic Midwifery	52	21.1
Religion	Christianity	201	81.7
	Muslim	45	18.3
Living Status	Students Hostel	149	60.6
	Off Hostel	81	32.9
	Living with Parent/family	16	6.5

Table 1 above shows that majority of the respondents 204 (82.9%) were female while 42 (17.1%) were male; 176 (71.5%) were below the age of 20 years, 60 (24.4%) were between 21 and 30 years while 10 (4.0%) were between 30 and 40 years; 216 (87.8%) were single while 20 (12.2%) were married; 189 (76.8%) were basic nursing program student, 52 (21.1%) were basic midwifery students while 5 were community nursing program

student; 201 (81.7%) were Christian while 45 (18.3%) were Muslim; 149 (60.6%) were living in the students hostel in the school premises, 81 (32.9%) were living on off campus hostels while 16 (6.5%) of the respondents were living with parents/ family.

➤ Knowledge of Students on Nutrition

Table 2 Showing Knowledge of Students on Nutrition N= 246 % = 100.0

Items	Variables	Frequency	Percent
Nutrition is defined as the science of foods, nutrients and other substances	Yes	245	99.6
	No	1	.4
Nutrients is a substance available in food that helps us to stay healthy	Yes	245	99.6
	No	1	.4
A balanced diet includes a variety of foods in adequate amounts and correct proportions	Yes	243	98.8
	No	2	1.2
“You are what you eat”	Yes	204	82.9
	No	42	17.1
Vitamins and minerals are often referred to as micronutrients	Yes	215	87.4
	No	31	12.6
Micronutrients are naturally produced in the body	Yes	127	51.6
	No	119	48.4
Nutrition plays an important role in diseases	Yes	217	88.2
	No	29	11.8
Assessment of a client's nutritional status include their height and weight	Yes	232	94.3
	No	14	5.7
There are six basic nutrients in the body	Yes	215	87.4
	No	31	12.6
About half of the diet should be made up of fruits and vegetable	Yes	208	84.6
	No	38	15.4
Nutrition may not be influenced by culture, health and age	Yes	77	31.3
	No	169	68.7
Food passes through the stomach directly by the small intestine	Yes	120	48.8
	No	126	51.2
Citrus fruits is a source of vitamin C	Yes	242	98.4
	No	4	1.6
Fast foods is a wrong eating habits	Yes	194	78.9
	No	52	21.1

Table 2 above shows that majority of the respondents 245 (99.6%) said that nutrition is defined as the science of foods, nutrients and other substances while 1 (0.4%) did not agree; 245 (99.6%) said that nutrients is a substance available in food that helps us to stay healthy while 1 (0.4%) did not agree; 243 (98.8%) said that a balanced diet includes a variety of foods in adequate amounts and correct proportions while 3 (1.2%) said it is not; 204 (82.9%) said that you are what you eat while 42 (17.1%) did not agree; 215 (87.4%) said that Vitamins and minerals are often referred to as micronutrients while 31 (12.7%) did not agree; 127 (51.6%) of the respondents said that micronutrients are naturally produced in the body while 119 (48.4%) said it is not; 217 (88.2%) of the respondents said that nutrition plays an important role in diseases while 29 (11.8%) said it does not; 232 (94.3%) of the respondents said that assessment of a client's nutritional status include their height and weight while 14 (5.7%) said

it is not; 215 (87.4%) of the respondents said that there are six basic nutrients in the body while 31(12.6%) said there are less or more basic nutrients; 208 (84.6%) of the respondents said that about half of the diet should be made up of fruits and vegetable while 38 (15.4%) said it should not; 169 (68.7%) of the respondents said that nutrition is influenced while 77 (31.3%) that nutrition may not be influenced by culture, health and age; 126 (51.2%) of the respondents said that food does not pass through the stomach directly by the small intestine while 120 (48.8%) said that food passes through the stomach directly by the small intestine; 242 (98.4%) of the respondents said that Citrus fruits is a source of vitamin C while 4 (1.6%) said it is not; 194 (78.9%) of the respondents said that fast foods is a wrong eating habits while 52 (21.1%) said fast food is not a wrong eating habit.

➤ Perception of Students on Nutrition

Table 3 Showing the Perception of Students on Nutrition N = 246 % = 100.0

Item	Variables	Frequency	Percent
Healthy diet is needed for good living	Agree	243	98.8
	Unsure	2	.8
	Disagree	1	.4
Fruits and vegetable should be consumed daily	Agree	234	95.1
	Unsure	8	3.3
	Disagree	4	1.6
Intake of pastry plus soft drink is a junk food	Agree	213	86.6
	Unsure	18	7.3
	Disagree	14	5.7
Adequate diet consist of eight food nutrients	Agree	213	86.6
	Unsure	18	7.3
	Disagree	15	6.1
It is not good to skip meals i.e. breakfast, lunch and dinner	Agree	223	90.7
	Unsure	12	4.9
	Disagree	11	4.5
In between meals is good for one's health	Agree	129	52.4
	Unsure	82	33.3
	Disagree	35	14.2
Excessive intake of meals make one healthy	Agree	28	11.4
	Unsure	23	9.3
	Disagree	195	79.3
Intake of fruits and vegetable makes a meal to be adequate	Agree	219	89.0
	Unsure	11	4.5
	Disagree	16	6.5
BMI is used to measure nutritional intake	Agree	218	88.6
	Unsure	11	4.5
	Disagree	17	6.9

Table 3 above shows that majority 243 (98.8%) of the respondents agreed that healthy diet is needed for good living, 2 (0.8%) were unsure while 1(0.4%) disagreed; 234 (95.1%) agreed that fruits and vegetable should be consumed daily, 8 (3.3%) were unsure while 4 (1.6%) disagreed; 213 (81.6%) of the respondents agreed that intake of pastry plus soft drink is a junk food, 18 (7.3%) were unsure while 15 (6.1%) disagreed; 213 (81.6%) of the respondents agreed that adequate diet consist of eight food nutrients, 18 (7.3%) were unsure while 15 (6.1%) disagreed; 223 (90.7%) of the respondents agreed that it is not good to skip meals i.e. breakfast, lunch and dinner, 12

(4.9%) were unsure while 11 (4.5%) disagreed; 129(52.4%) of the respondents agreed that in between meals is good for one's health, 82(33.4%) were unsure while 28 (11.4%) disagreed; 195(79.3%) of the respondents disagreed with excessive intake of meals make one healthy, 28 (11.4%) agreed while 23 (9.3%) were unsure; 219 (89.0%) of the respondents agreed that intake of fruits and vegetable makes a meal to be adequate, 11 (4.5%) were unsure while 16 (6.5%) disagreed; 218 (88.6%) of the respondents agreed that BMI is used to measure nutritional intake, 11(4.5%) were unsure while 17 (6.9%) disagreed.

Table 4 Showing Factors Influencing Student's Nutrition N= 246 %=100.0

Item	Variables	Frequency	Percent
Cost of food item	Agree	243	98.8
	Disagree	3	1.2
Availability of food	Agree	229	93.1
	Unsure	8	3.3
	Disagree	9	3.7
Knowledge on nutrition	Agree	197	80.1
	Unsure	24	9.8
	Disagree	25	10.2
Time Constraint	Agree	206	83.7
	Unsure	30	12.2
	Disagree	10	4.1
Genetic make up	Agree	152	61.8
	Unsure	49	19.9
	Disagree	45	18.3
Taste/palatability of the food	Agree	219	89.0
	Unsure	23	9.3
	Disagree	4	1.6
Culture	Agree	223	90.7
	Unsure	13	5.3
	Disagree	10	4.1
Income	Agree	238	96.7
	Unsure	6	2.4
	Disagree	2	.8
Hunger	Agree	201	81.7
	Unsure	25	10.2
	Disagree	20	8.1
Increased appetite	Agree	203	82.5
	Unsure	31	12.6
	Disagree	12	4.9

Table 4 above shows that majority 243 (98.8%) of the respondents agreed that cost of food item is a factor that influences nutrition while 3 (1.2%) disagreed; 229 (93.1%) agreed that availability of food influences their nutrition, 8 (3.3%) were unsure while 9 (3.7%) disagreed; 197(80.1%) of the respondents agreed their knowledge of nutrition influences them, 24 (9.8%) were unsure while 25 (10.2%) disagreed; 206 (83.7%) of the respondents agreed that time constraint was a factor that influences them on nutrition, 30 (12.2%) were unsure while 10 (4.1%); 152 (61.8%) of the respondents agreed that genetic makeup was a factor that influences their nutrition, 49 (19.9%) were unsure while 45 (18.3%) disagreed; 219 (89.0%) of the respondents agreed that taste/palatability of the food

was a factor that influences their nutrition, 23 (9.3%) were unsure while 4(1.6%) disagreed; 223(90.7%) of the respondents agreed that culture was a factor that influences their nutrition, 13 (5.3%) were unsure while 10 (4.1%) disagreed; 238(96.7%) of the respondents agreed that income was a factor that influences their nutrition, 6 (2.4%) were unsure while 2 (0.8%) disagreed; 201 (81.7%) of the respondents agreed that hunger was a factor that influences their nutrition, 25 (10.2%) were unsure while 20 (8.1%) disagreed; 203 (82.5%) of the respondents agreed that increased appetite was a factor that influences their nutrition, 31 (12.6%) were unsure while 12 (4.9%) disagreed.

➤ *Prevention of Nutritional Diseases*

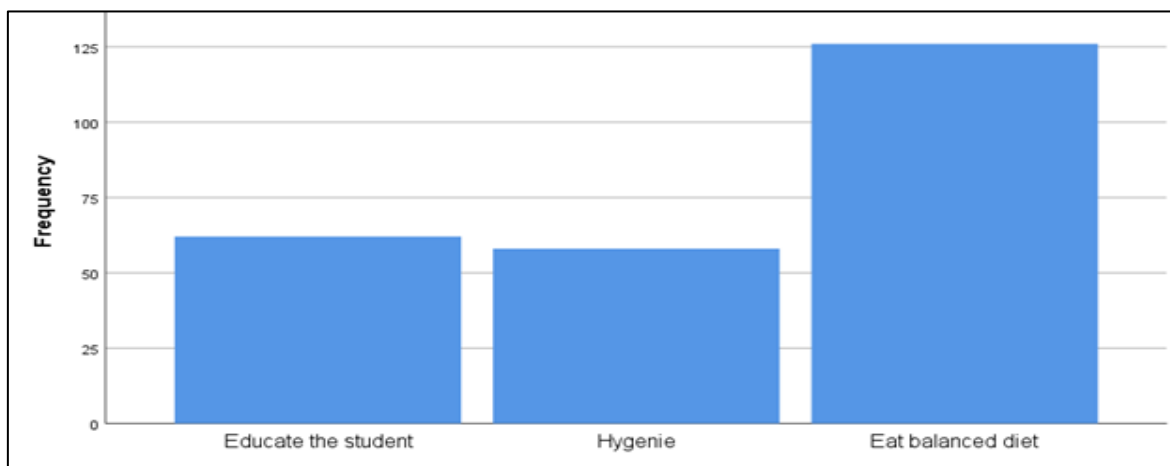


Fig 1 Showing what Individual Must do to Prevent Nutritional Diseases

Fig 1 above shows that 126(51.2%) said that eating balanced diet is a preventive measures; 62 (25.5%) said that educating the students is a preventive measures while

58 (23.6%) said that personal hygiene helps to prevent nutritional diseases.

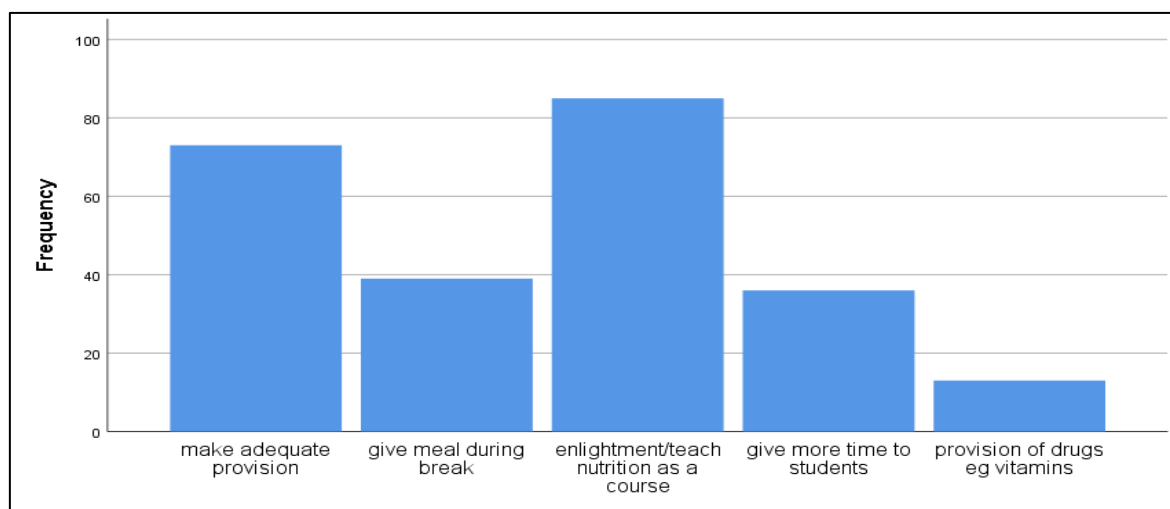


Fig 2 Showing the School Must do to Prevent Nutritional Diseases

Fig 2 above shows that 85 (34.6%) of the respondents said that enlightenment/teaching nutrition as a course can help in prevention of nutritional diseases, 73 (29.7%) said that making adequate provision helps in prevention of nutritional diseases, 39 (15.9%) said that given meal

during break helps in prevention, 36 (14.6%) said that given students more time to prepare helps to prevent nutritional diseases while 13(5.3%) said that given supplements such as vitamins helps in prevention of nutritional diseases.

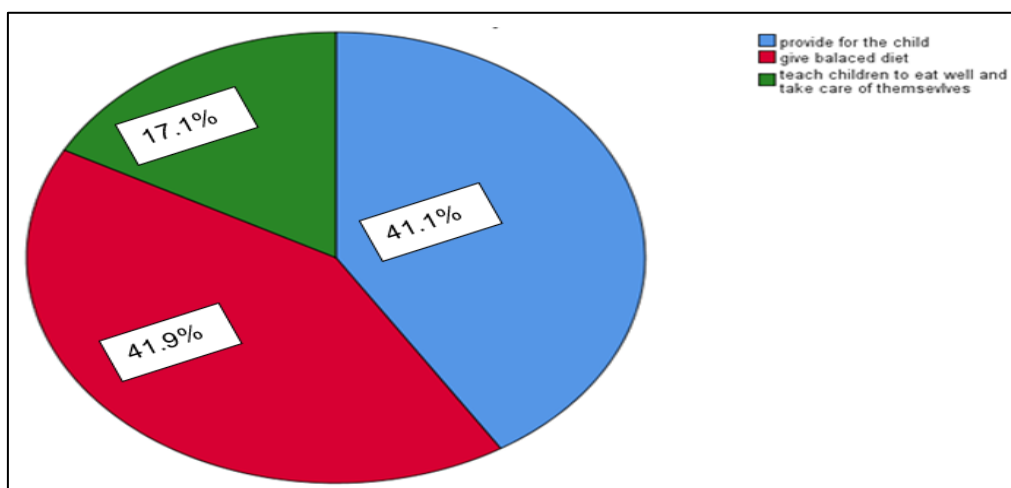


Fig 3 Showing what Family must do to Prevent Nutritional Diseases

Fig 3 above shows that 103 (41.9%) of the respondents said that the family needed to give their children balanced diet, 101 (41.1%) said that parent need

to provide for their children while 42 (17.1%) said that parent should teach their children to eat well and takes care of themselves.

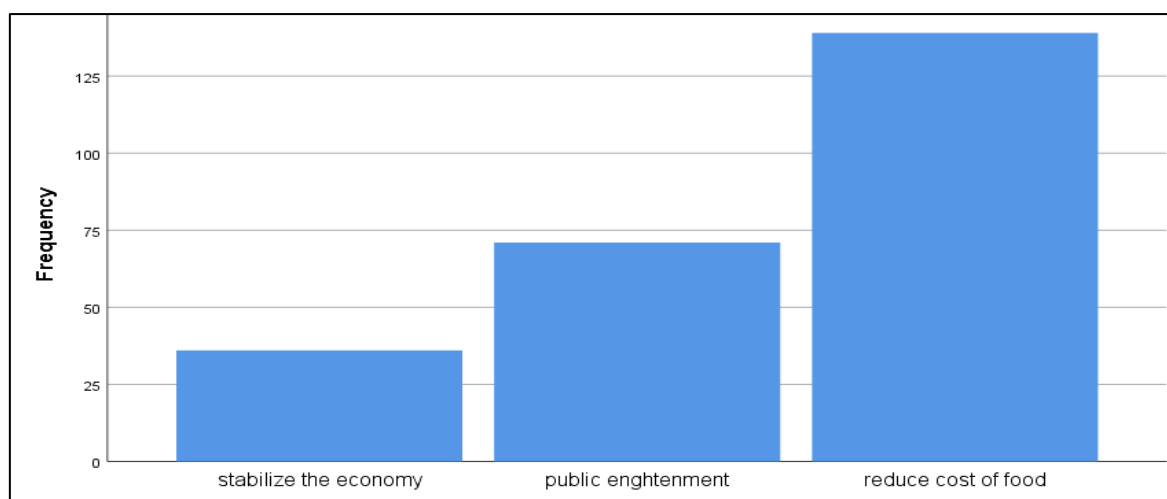


Fig 4 Showing what Government must do to Prevent Nutritional Diseases

Fig 4 above shows that 139 (56.5%) of the respondents said that government needed to reduce the cost of items, 71 (28.9%) said that government needed to organize a public enlightenment programme on nutrition to the masses while 36 (14.6%) said the government needed to make the economy stable.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results shows that shows that majority of the respondents 204 (82.9%) were female; 176 (71.5%) were below the age of 20 years; 216 (87.8%) were single; 189 (76.8%) were basic nursing program student; 201 (81.7%) were Christian; 149(60.6%) were living in, 81 (32.9%) were living on off campus hostels. It was also shown that majority of the respondents 245 (99.6%) said that nutrition is defined as the science of foods, nutrients and other substances; 245 (99.6%) said that nutrients is a substance available in food that helps us to stay healthy; 243 (98.8%) said that a balanced diet includes a variety of foods in adequate amounts and correct proportions; 204 (82.9%) said that you are what you eat; 215 (87.4%) said that Vitamins and minerals are often referred to as micronutrients.

127 (51.6%) of the respondents said that micronutrients are naturally produced in the body; 217 (88.2%) of the respondents said that nutrition plays an important role in diseases; 232 (94.3%) of the respondents said that assessment of a client's nutritional status include their height and weight; 215 (87.4%) of the respondents said that there are six basic nutrients in the body; 208 (84.6%) of the respondents said that about half of the diet should be made up of fruits and vegetable; 169 (68.7%) of the respondents said that nutrition is influenced by culture, health and age; 126 (51.2%) of the respondents said that food does not pass through the stomach directly by the small intestine; 242 (98.4%) of the respondents said that Citrus fruits is a source of vitamin C; 194 (78.9%) of the respondents said that fast foods is a wrong eating

habits. This actually showed that the students have a good knowledge of nutrition.

The study further showed that majority 243 (98.8%) of the respondents agreed that healthy diet is needed for good living; 234 (95.1%) agreed that fruits and vegetable should be consumed daily; 213 (81.6%) of the respondents agreed that intake of pastry plus soft drink is a junk food; 213 (81.6%) of the respondents agreed that adequate diet consist of eight food nutrients; 223 (90.7%) of the respondents agreed that it is not good to skip meals i.e. breakfast, lunch and dinner; 129(52.4%) of the respondents agreed that in between meals is good for one's health; 195(79.3%) of the respondents disagreed with excessive intake of meals make one healthy; 219 (89.0%) of the respondents agreed that intake of fruits and vegetable makes a meal to be adequate; 218 (88.6%) of the respondents agreed that BMI is used to measure nutritional intake. The perception of the students about nutrition is very high.

Majority 243 (98.8%) of the respondents agreed that cost of food item is a factor that influences nutrition; 229 (93.1%) agreed that availability of food influences their nutrition; 197(80.1%) of the respondents agreed their knowledge of nutrition influences them; 206 (83.7%) of the respondents agreed that time constraint was a factor that influences them on nutrition; 152 (61.8%) of the respondents agreed that genetic makeup was a factor that influences their nutrition; 219 (89.0%) of the respondents agreed that taste/palatability of the food was a factor that influences their nutrition; 223(90.7%) of the respondents agreed that culture was a factor that influences their nutrition; 238(96.7%) of the respondents agreed that income was a factor that influences their nutrition; 201 (81.7%) of the respondents agreed that hunger was a factor that influences their nutrition and 203 (82.5%) of the respondents agreed that increased appetite was a factor that influences their nutrition.

Finally, it was shown that majority 126 (51.2%) of the respondents said that eating balanced diet is a preventive measures; 85 (34.6%) of the respondents said that enlightenment/teaching nutrition as a course can help in prevention of nutritional diseases; 103 (41.9%) of the respondents said that the family needed to give their children balanced diet and 139 (56.5%) of the respondents said that government needed to reduce the cost of items.

➤ *Discussion of Findings*

The findings from this study indicate that 100-level nursing students at Oyo State College of Nursing and Midwifery possess a relatively high level of nutritional knowledge. This is evident in their accurate understanding of basic nutrition concepts such as the definition of nutrition 99.6%, the importance of a balanced diet 98.8%, and the identification of micronutrients like vitamins and minerals 87.4%. These results align with the findings of Salami and Okon (2024), who emphasized that nursing students often exhibit foundational nutrition knowledge due to exposure to health-related content in their academic training. However, certain misconceptions persist among the students. For instance, only about half 51.6% correctly identified that micronutrients are not naturally produced by the body. This suggests that although general knowledge is high, gaps remain in more technical areas. This mirrors findings by Ojo, Akinwunmi, and Bello (2023), who observed that healthcare students often struggle with the biochemical and physiological details of nutrition, which can affect their ability to make informed dietary choices and patient education. The study also revealed a positive perception towards nutrition among students, with 98.8% agreeing that a healthy diet is essential for good living and 95.1% supporting daily consumption of fruits and vegetables. These attitudes are encouraging and correspond with the assertions of Ajayi and Ogunleye (2022) that students in health disciplines are generally more aware of the benefits of healthy eating. Nevertheless, the gap between knowledge/perception and actual behavior is a concern echoed by Tetteh et al. (2023), who noted that despite awareness, students' dietary behaviors often fall short due to environmental and economic pressures. Cost and availability of food were the most frequently cited factors influencing students' nutrition, with 98.8% and 93.1% agreement, respectively. This finding aligns with Onuoha and Okeowo (2023), who identified financial constraints and food access as primary barriers to healthy eating among university students in Nigeria.

The study further found that time constraints 83.7% and cultural influence 90.7% played significant roles, confirming previous findings by Yusuf and Nwaogu (2021), who emphasized the influence of socio-cultural norms and academic schedules on student eating patterns. Students acknowledged that factors such as income 96.7%, hunger 81.7%, and appetite 82.5% affect their food choices. These results are consistent with Uwakwe and Adebayo (2021), who found that both physiological and socioeconomic factors significantly impact dietary decisions among Nigerian youth. The emphasis on taste and palatability (89%) also supports the view of Bamidele

et al. (2022) that preferences and peer-influenced choices often override nutritional knowledge in actual food consumption. Students suggested that preventive measures against nutritional diseases include balanced diets 51.2% and education on nutrition 34.6%. This supports the call by Balogun and Okafor (2023) for the integration of nutrition education into nursing curricula as a proactive strategy to improve both personal and professional health literacy. It also resonates with Edewor and Oladokun's (2022) argument that institutional environments can either reinforce or weaken healthy behaviors depending on the level of support provided.

➤ *Implications to Nursing*

The findings of this study have significant implications for nursing education and practice. Nutrition plays a foundational role in health promotion and disease prevention. The knowledge and perception that nursing students acquire during their formative years directly impact their clinical competence and health promotion capabilities. When nurses are well-versed in nutrition, they can effectively counsel patients, identify signs of nutritional deficiencies, and contribute to holistic care planning. Furthermore, poor personal nutrition among student nurses may lead to fatigue, reduced concentration, and academic underperformance, ultimately affecting the quality of care they provide in clinical settings. Therefore, improving the nutritional literacy and behavior of nursing students is essential for building a healthy and competent nursing workforce.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ *Based on the Study Findings and the Reviewed Literature, the Following Recommendations are Made:*

- **Curriculum Integration:** Nutrition education should be deeply integrated into the nursing curriculum as a compulsory and practical subject throughout the duration of the program.
- **Nutritional Counseling Services:** The college should establish a student wellness center that offers nutritional counseling and healthy eating workshops to support students' dietary habits.
- **Affordable and Accessible Healthy Meals:** The college cafeteria should prioritize the provision of affordable, balanced meals, particularly fruits and vegetables, to reduce reliance on unhealthy fast food.
- **Institutional Support for Healthy Living:** Hostel facilities should include communal kitchens or provisions that encourage meal planning and healthy food preparation among students.
- **Government and Stakeholder Involvement:** Policymakers should subsidize food prices and provide nutrition-focused grants or interventions within higher institutions to reduce financial barriers to healthy eating.
- **Parental and Community Involvement:** Parents should be sensitized on the importance of supporting their wards nutritionally during their time in college.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study has shown that 100-level nursing students at Oyo State College of Nursing and Midwifery possess a high level of knowledge and positive perception about nutrition. However, several factors such as cost of food, time constraints, and cultural influences limit the application of this knowledge in their dietary behaviors. Addressing these barriers through institutional, community, and policy interventions is essential. A healthy nursing student is more likely to excel academically, serve as a role model, and contribute effectively to health care delivery. As such, strategic efforts must be made to promote nutrition literacy, support behavioral change, and cultivate environments that empower nursing students to make informed and sustainable dietary choices.

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