

An investigation into the current nutritional status and lifestyle of university students of various ethnic backgrounds studying in the East Midlands, UK

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Introduction

It has been suggested that the featured lifestyle of university students characterised by living away from home, busy study schedules and social context changes could exert a potential impact on their nutritional status¹. Besides, emerging evidence has indicated that health inequalities exist among certain non-white minority ethnic groups such as African-Caribbean (AC) populations in the UK, the group of which tends to have a threefold increased risk of developing chronic diseases than the white population².

Aim

- To investigate the nutritional status and general lifestyle patterns among students studying in De Montfort University, UK.
- To find out whether significant variations exist in those aspects among AC and Non-AC student populations.

Method

- Participants (n, 30) aged 18-35 were recruited from De Montfort university in Leicester, UK



Results

Men / Women (30 in total, 7 M / 23 F)		
Parameters	Mean ± SEM	Reference values
Age (years)	24.5 ± 0.9	
BMI (kg/m ²)	23.3 ± 0.7	25.0 – 29.9 (overweight) ³
Systolic blood pressure (mmHg)	126.3 ± 1.7	≥ 140 (hypertension, HP) ⁴
Diastolic blood pressure (mmHg)	77.0 ± 1.5	≥ 90 (HP) ⁴

Table 1. Baseline characteristics of the study group

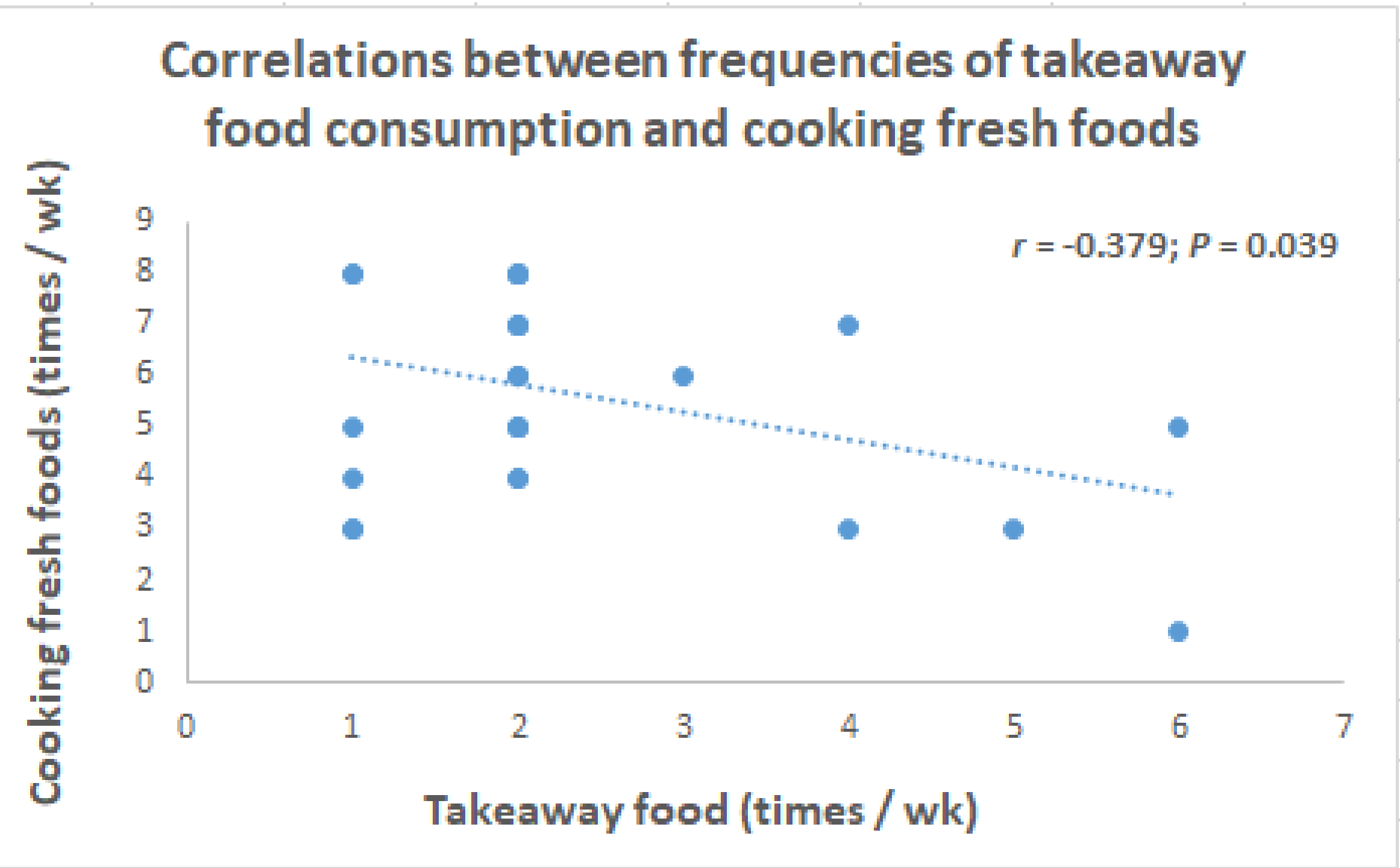


Figure 1. Significant correlations found in dietary behaviours

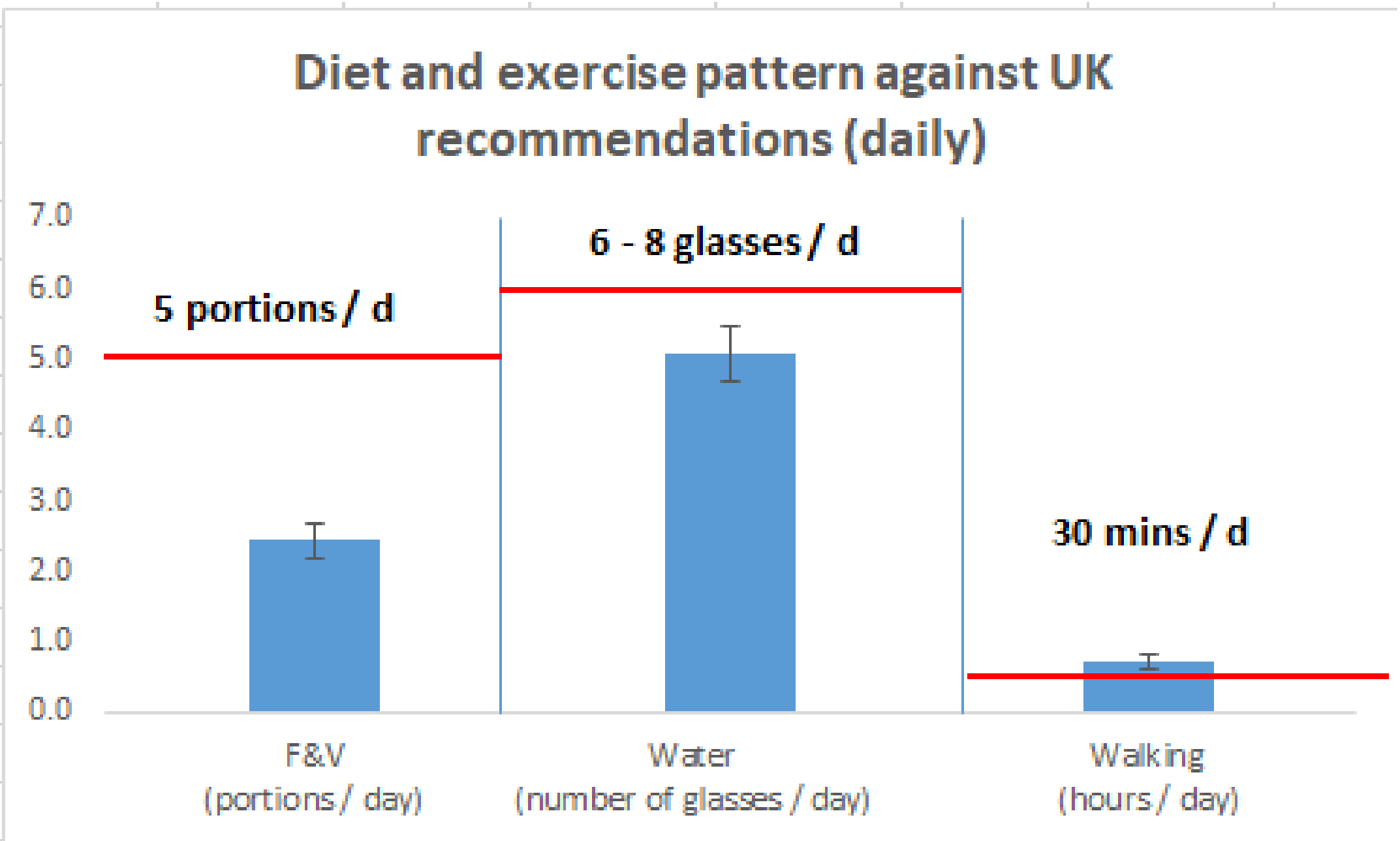


Figure 2. Dietary and exercise practice on a daily basis

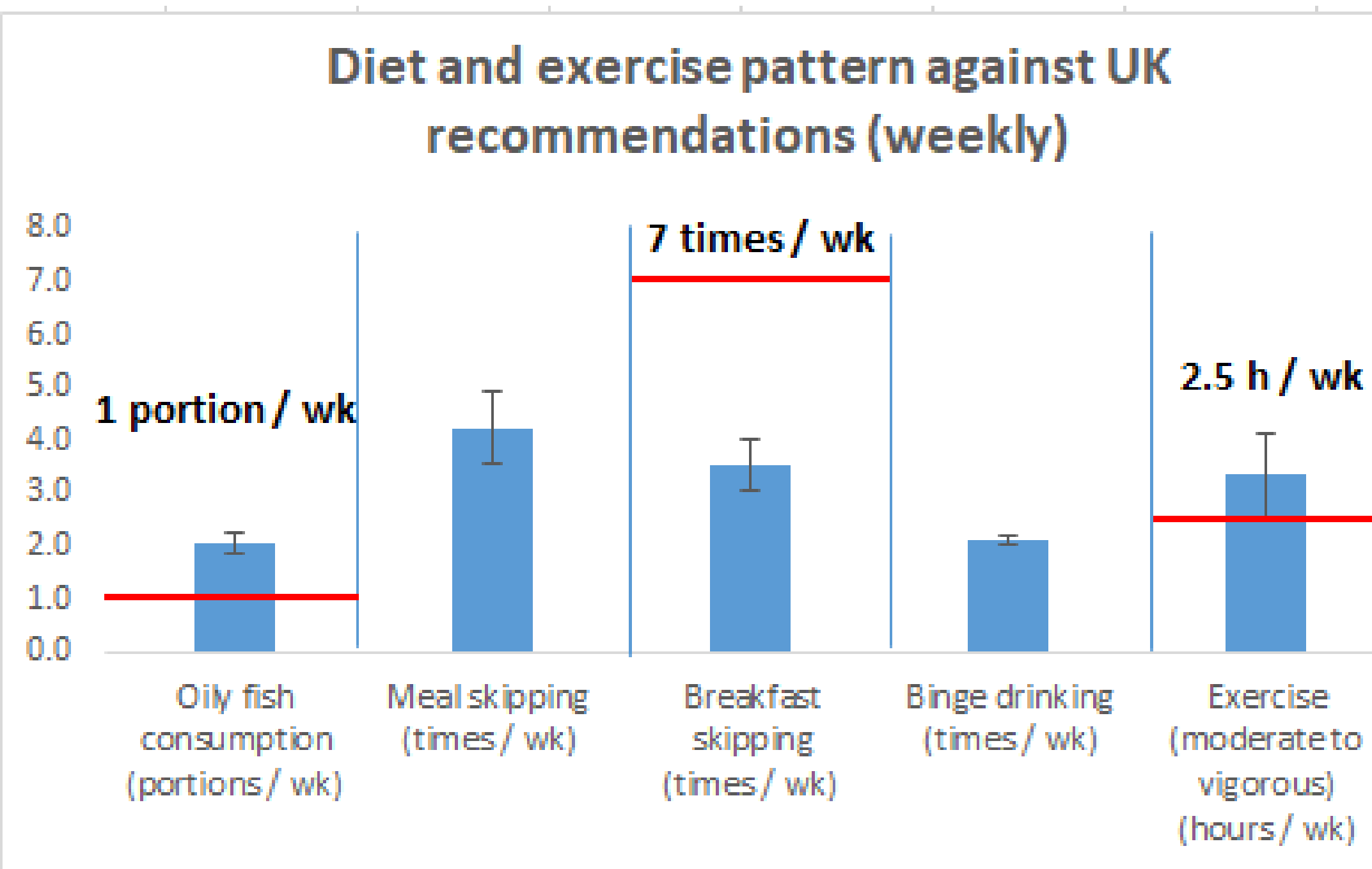


Figure 3. Dietary and exercise practice on a weekly basis

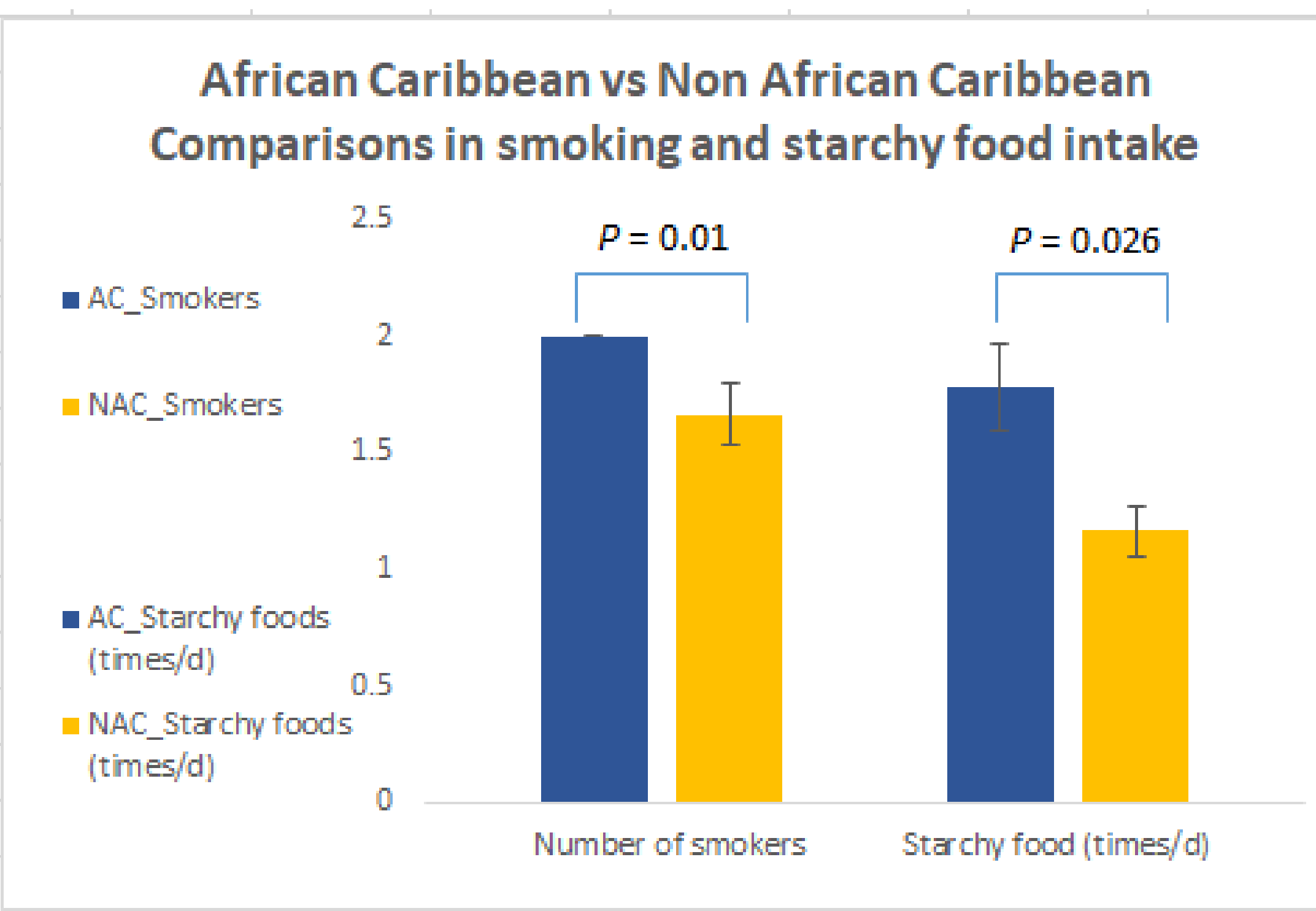


Figure 4. Variations in lifestyle factors between AC and NAC ethnic groups

- The meal skipping behaviour was significantly associated with the frequency of consuming sugary snacks ($r = 0.43$; $P = 0.018$).
- More sugary snacks students consumed such as biscuits and confectionery foods, more often they tended to have fizzy drinks during the day ($r = 0.37$; $P = 0.042$).

Conclusion

- The overall health status (BMI, BP) appeared healthy among sampled students.
- Certain aspects of dietary practice needed improvements including daily water consumption and F&V consumption, yet, students stayed physically active overall.
- Differences were observed in certain lifestyle factors between the 2 ethnic groups, yet further studies with a larger sample size are needed to confirm the findings.

References

1. Bagordo F., et al. (2013). Journal of Food & Nutrition Research, 52 (3).
2. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) (2013). Public health guideline [PH46].
3. WHO (2011). Report of a WHO Expert Consultation.
4. NICE (2011). Hypertension in Adults: Diagnosis and Management.