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 status\(^1\). 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 population\(^2\).

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameters</th>
<th>Men (23)</th>
<th>Women (7)</th>
<th>Reference values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>24.5 ± 0.9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>BMI (kg/m(^2))</td>
<td>23.3 ± 0.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.0 – 29.9 (overweight)(^3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systolic blood pressure (mmHg)</td>
<td>126.3 ± 1.7</td>
<td>120 ± 1.7</td>
<td>≥ 140 (hypertension, HP)(^4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diastolic blood pressure (mmHg)</td>
<td>77.0 ± 1.5</td>
<td>75.0 ± 1.5</td>
<td>≥ 90 (HP)(^4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Baseline characteristics of the study group

- 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
4. NICE (2011). Hypertension in Adults: Diagnosis and Management.