

The Impact of Daily Lifestyle Choices on the Physical and Mental Health of Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the health behaviors and lifestyle choices of young adults 18-30 years. Using a survey, data was collected from a diverse mix of people to assess factors like physical activity, dietary habits, sleep patterns, allergies, and personal well-being. The results indicated that a majority of respondents sleep between 5-7 hours per night, with nearly 30% sleeping for 7 or more hours, yet a significant amount of people still report feeling tired and exhausted throughout the day. Dietary habits show that over half of the participants consume only 1-2 servings of fruit and vegetables per day, showing poor eating habits. For physical activity, about one-third exercise rarely or never, while fewer people do exercise daily. Additionally, most young adults rarely or occasionally fall ill and a significant portion have allergies. Despite these factors, most young adults perceive themselves as well-supported by friends and family which is a positive for mental health, and a majority are up to date with their vaccinations. Most people feel safe in their environment, but stress and workload management vary. Some participants report feeling overwhelmed at times.

INTRODUCTION

The article Huang et. al. (2022) reviewed studies on young adults ages 18-34 so see how sitting and screen time affected health over time. The study found that mostly sedentary behavior is linked to problems including weight gain, obesity, heart issues and mental health issues like depression. Another article by Wickham. S. R., et al, (2020) talks about sleep quality as one of the biggest factors impacting mental health followed by physical health as well as diet are all significant factors. The article Deslippe et. al (2023) barriers and facilitators to diet, physical activity, and lifestyle changes in young adults. They found that some barriers are lack of motivation, time, social support, and environmental issues.

Article by Alosaimi, N., et al. (2023) BMC Public Health talks about Physical activity (PA), sedentary behaviour (SB) and diet play an important role in the physical and mental health of young people. Understanding how these behaviours cluster, and the impact of clusters on health is important for the development of public health. Vincent-Gabriel et al. (2024) studied how addictive behaviors relate to obesity, physical activity, sedentary time, and sleep quality in young adults. They found that addictions such as substance use, are linked to having poorer physical health, including higher obesity rates, less physical activity, and worse sleep quality. This study shows the connection between addictive behaviors and health in young adults.

NCDs (non communicable diseases) generally develop in the elderly population, but lifestyle behaviors become established during young adulthood, when individuals do not perceive that an unhealthy lifestyle implies a higher health risk. Findings from the study conducted, call attention to the importance of implementing public health programs targeting reduction of sitting time among university students. (García-Pérez-de-Sevilla, G., et al. (2021).) The purpose of this study was to analyze the correlation between young adult health and daily life choices that have an impact on it.

METHOD

Participants

359 people that were 17 - 30 years old participated in this study. 191 responses were from females and 168 were from males. These people were from different parts of the world like India and the USA. They were not paid for their participation.

Materials

A Google Form with 20 questions for young adults is provided below.

<https://forms.gle/2v1vG2JPTNFhAbGF9>

1. What is your age? Ages under/equal to 35 and above/equal to 18
2. What is your gender? Male or Female
3. How much sleep do you get during the night? Ranging from less than 5 hours to 5-7 hours, or more than 7 hours.
4. Do you feel tired during the day? Options were yes feeling tired all day, to sometimes feeling tired, or no, having enough energy during the day.
5. What do you usually eat for breakfast/lunch/dinner? The options are listed below.
Breads, pasta, grains
nuts, seeds

cake, cookies, candy, ice cream, pie, other sweets

Nothing / I skip meals

Meat, fish, poultry

Fruits and vegetables

alcoholic beverages

caffeinated beverages (tea, coffee)

milk, cheese, other dairy

Fast food or takeout

Other: Where they could write in their own option.

6. How often do you exercise? Options ranged from never to everyday and everything in between such as several times a week, once a week, and rarely.
7. How often do you get sick? Very often (several times a month) ,Occasionally (once or twice a month), Rarely (a few times a year), or Almost never.
8. Do you have any allergies? Options were yes, food allergies, yes, environmental allergies (pollen, dust, etc.), yes, medication allergies, no, I don't have any allergies, or other.
9. How many servings of fruit and vegetables do you have each day? Less than 1 serving, 1-2 serving, 3-4 servings, 5-6 servings, 7 or more servings.
10. Do you often feel stressed and overwhelmed? Yes, most of the time, sometimes, rarely, and never.
11. Do you have any health issues? Yes, chronic illnesses, Yes, recent health problems or injuries, No, I am generally healthy, I have minor health issues that do not affect me much, or Other: (where they can list their own).
12. Do you have friends and family to support you? Yes, I have strong support from friends and family, yes but support is limited, sometimes I feel supported, no, I do not have support from friends or family, and I handle things on my own.
13. Do you feel like you live in a safe environment? Yes, I feel very safe, Yes, I generally feel safe, Sometimes, I have concerns about safety, No, I do not feel safe.
14. Are you up to date on vaccinations? Yes, No, or Partially up to date.
15. Do you wear your seatbelt while driving? Yes, No, or Sometimes.
16. Is there anything that makes you worried? Yes, I have specific worries or concerns, Sometimes, I feel worried without specific reasons. No, I generally don't feel worried, List things that make you worried. (Section where participants could list the things that made them worried).
17. Do you feel like your workload is manageable? Yes, completely manageable, mostly manageable with some challenges, sometimes manageable, sometimes overwhelming, rarely manageable; often overwhelming, no, my workload is unmanageable, and I don't work.

PROCEDURE

Participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire and answer all the questions in the google form. There were about 20 questions on the survey relating to health and lifestyle.

RESULTS

Question	Percentage
Responses	359 people answered
What is your gender?	53.2% female 46.8% male
How much sleep do you get during the night?	66.6% get 5-7 hrs , 29% get 7 or more hrs , and 4.5% get less than 5 hrs .
Do you feel tired during the day?	66.6% sometimes feel tired , 20.9% said no, they have enough energy throughout the day , and 12.5% feel very tired during the day .
What do you usually eat for breakfast/lunch/dinner?	359 people answered
How often do you exercise?	32.6% rarely do , 22.6% exercise every day , 21.4% said never , 15.6% exercise several times a week , 7.8% said once a week .
How often do you get sick?	62.1% said rarely (few times a year) , 15.6% said almost never , 15.3% said occasionally (once or twice a month) , 7% said very often (several times a month) .
Do you have any allergies?	23.7% of people have allergies.
How many servings of fruit and vegetables do you have each day?	56.5% said 1-2 servings , 21.4% said 3-4 servings , 18.7% said less than 1 serving , 2.5% said 5-6 servings , 0.8% said 7 or more servings .
Do you often feel stressed and overwhelmed?	48.7% said sometimes , 27% said rarely , 13.1% said yes, most of the time , 11.1% said never .
Do you have health issues?	21.4% answered yes .

Do you have friends and family to support you?	76.6% said Yes, I have strong support from friends and family , 9.5% said Yes, but support is limited , 5.6% said sometimes I feel supported , 5.6% said I handle things on my own , and 2.8% said No, I do not have support from friends or family .
Do you feel like you live in a safe environment?	57.7% said yes they feel very safe , 26.2% said yes they generally feel safe , 13.9% of people said sometimes they have concerns about safety , and 2.2% said they don't feel safe .
Are you up to date on vaccinations?	62.7% said yes , 20.1% said no , 17.3% said partially up to date .
Do you wear your seatbelt while driving?	76% said yes , 13.6% said no , and 10.3% said sometimes .
Is there anything that makes you worried?	44.3% said no they generally don't feel worried , 33.7% said sometimes they feel worried without specific concerns , 19.8% said yes they have specific worries and concerns . 2.2% listed specific worries.
Do you feel your workload is manageable?	30.9% said Yes, completely manageable , 26.7% said Sometimes manageable, sometimes overwhelming , 25.1% said mostly manageable with some challenges , 6.1% said they don't work , 5.8% said no, my workload is unmanageable , 5.3% said rarely manageable and often overwhelming .

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to gain an understanding of how young adults live their daily lives, including their routines, social support, and health habits. Data collection was done via an online google form which included questions about lifestyle, relationships, and overall well-being. Our analysis shows some patterns. For instance, support from family and friends might decrease the feeling of being overwhelmed and stressed among young adults. However, 161 participants who reported having strong support also said they felt safer and more secure in the community. Moreover, a relationship between regular exercise and health can also be shown. Specifically,

148 people who exercise frequently (several times a week or daily) tend to fall sick less often. It is suggested that keeping a regular pattern of exercise may have positive results on physical health. Overall, this suggests that the young adult population with limited social support is vulnerable to feeling overwhelmed; secondly, regular physical activity, ideally 3-5 times per week, decreases the chances of falling sick. The findings underline the importance of strong social ties and healthy lifestyle habits in promoting better mental and physical health among the young adult population. Lastly, this research provides information about the links between social support, physical activity, and general well-being among young adults. It suggests a need to have social ties and motivate healthy routines and strategies to improve their mental health. Raising awareness regarding these benefits of social support and regular exercise is highly useful in helping young adults to deal with challenges which everyday life may have on them. In conclusion, this research informs people about the different factors that can help young adults build a better and healthier lifestyle.

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