

Uncovering the Neglected Meal: Medical Students in Sri Lanka and Skipping Meals.

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Abstract

Background: To figure out why a lot of students who are at risk for food insecurity consistently skip meals in university, this research follows the daily food travels of those students. to find the reasons for skipping meals.

Purpose: The aim of this study is to analyse how a daily routine of a medical student of Sri Lanka, affects their eating patterns.

Design/ methodology/Approach- A Survey study was implemented using convenient sampling technique where 170 questionnaires were distributed through google forms from which 148 responses were obtained. To test the hypothesis, Cronbach alpha and correlation analysis IBM SPSS 21.0 package was utilized.

Findings- This article analyses how a daily routine of a medical student of Sri Lanka affects their eating patterns. The findings demonstrate that university lecture schedules, stress, depression, and loneliness are making students skip at least one of the main meals daily. The authors' research shows that frequently skipped meals of the students is breakfast.

Conclusion- This research provides information to medical university administrations, families, and friends. Therefore, university administration, families and other students may take required decision regarding the quality of life of medical students based on their university lecture schedules, stress, depression, and loneliness. This research study contributes significantly to this aspect telling universities and families the substantial requirement for stress and time management these days to generate a healthy eating pattern.

Key words: *breakfast, lunch, dinner, lectures, time management, stress, healthy eating patterns.*

Uncovering the Neglected Meal: Medical Students in Sri Lanka are Skipping Meals.

This research substantially emphasizes on notifying the medical schools regarding the lifestyle issues of Sri Lankan medical students. A medical student's life has very busy schedules shared between lectures and practical classes. This makes many students skip meals easily. (Maggie Dickinson et al., 2023) [7]

Even though we know only a few circumstances surrounding students snacking or how it can affect other dietary practices, such as skipping meals and snacking. These two are more expected to play a significant role in the progression of overweight and obesity. The circumstances in which students' snack are investigated in this research, as well as whether skipped meals and student demographic traits. (Anthony Worsley & David Crawford et al, 2007) [1] Since, as humans it is very important to consume at least 3 main meals a day.

1.0 Problem statement

Uncovering the neglected meal is problem statement in this study. Most of the medical students are experience lack of energy and other health issues due to meal skipping. Finding the importance of the 3 meals and identifying the reason for skipping it may bring about implementing changes that will improve the students' quality of life. This research based on Sri Lankan medical students skipping meals was not done as research before by authors. Since it is a common issue which should be brought to light and should be discussed, to make some rational changes in university administrations.

2.0 Project rationale

This research is undertaken to identify "Uncovering the Neglected Meal: Medical Students in Sri Lanka are Skipping Meals.". Particularly, it aims to discover the mostly

skipped meal among student life and the reasons for skipping the main meals. Most medical undergraduate students are facing many health issues due to skipping meals. So, this research could help us find which meal is skipped the most and we can make suggestions and remedies for the meals skipped. Institutes therefore can arrange flexible study timetables allowing more time and priority to the meal breaks. Healthy eating helps students perform well. Also, it could help to enlighten the academical institution about the impact of the academical stress on to the meal intake of the undergraduate students of the medical faculty and encourage students to maintain healthy eating.

I propose to develop a questionnaire to determine the most skipped meal among medical undergraduate students in Sri Lanka within the scope of selected tools. This research could influence the medical university administration decision making in class schedules in future.

3.0 Research aim

The aim of this project is to identify the most skipped meal amongst medical undergraduates from the three main meals, which are, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. And, to figure out the reasons to skip meals based on their daily life routine.

4.0 Project objectives

- To critically define terms such as the main meals, lifestyle of the medical students and reasons for them to skip meals.
- To perform primary research with the use of questionnaires to identify the key factors for skipping meals in medical students.

- To analyse quantitative data and draw conclusions as to the influence of skipping meals on students' lives and to provide recommendations for the lifestyle changes.

Project Methodology

The primary goal of the study will be achieved by gathering information using a Google Forms-created online questionnaire that will be distributed across medical undergraduate students' WhatsApp groups and other social media platforms, during a two-month period. The secondary literature employing journal articles from the Google Scholar database and several other articles such as pub med, etc. will cover the other objectives. IBM SPSS software was used for the data evaluation of the information gathered from the Google Form. To test the hypothesis, Cronbach alpha and correlation analysis IBM SPSS 21.0 package was utilized.

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k \sigma_y^2}{\sigma_x^2} \right)$$

k the number of items in the measure

σ_y^2 variance associated with each

σ_x^2 variance associated of the total scores

Results and discussion

There were 148 Sri Lankan medical undergraduate students who took part in this questionnaire analysis. Based on the questions in the questionnaire the following results were obtained.

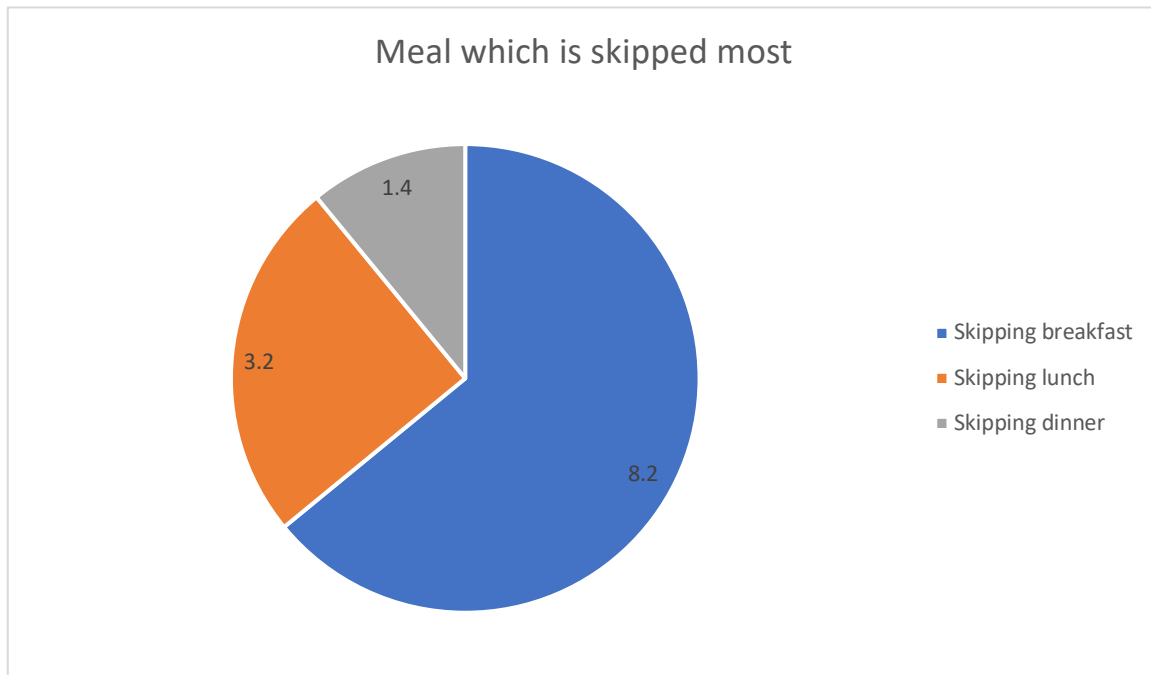
Table 1 The frequency of main meals skipped amongst the student's population.

Do you skip any main meals?	Frequency	Percentage
No	20	13.5%
Yes	128	86.4%
total	148	100%

Note: Questionnaire item described: As a Sri Lankan undergraduate medical student, do you skip any main meals?

As shown in Table 1, majority of the students who participated in the study skipped at least one of the main meals.

Figure 1. The most skipped meal among the students.



Note: Questionnaire item described: As which meal is skipped mostly in Sri Lankan medical undergraduates?

According to the analysis the mostly skipped meal among Sri Lankan medical students is the breakfast, followed by lunch and finally the dinner.

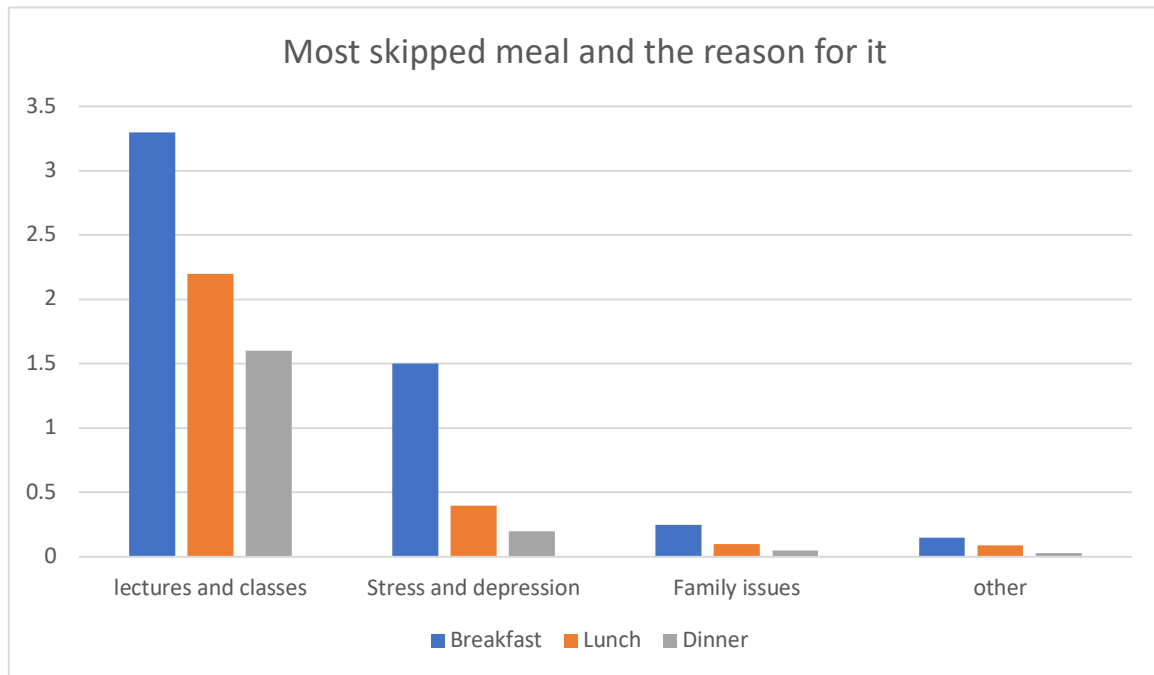
Table 2: Reasons for skipping meals.

reasons	frequency	percentage
Due to lectures and classes	106	71.6%
Stress and depression	32	21.6%
Family issues	6	4.0%
other	4	2.7%

Note: Questionnaire item described: As what is the main reason for skipping meals?

The latter part of the main research question is identified and justified with the data provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Comparison of most skipped meal and the reason for it.



Note: Questionnaire item described: As per the results most of the Sri Lankan medical undergraduates skip breakfast due to lectures and classes as the main reasons.

The limitation of this study stand as, information gathering was at a certain level due to the research's constraints. size of 148 students, even though the majority of the student sample's members belonged to a single ethnic group, whereas ideally there should have been an equal representation of each ethnic group.

Additionally, only 4 chosen reasons for skipping meals were evaluated, even though there are alternative techniques to minimize the frequency of skipping meals. Additionally, it should be mentioned that only skipping the main meals were considered, even though there are other small meals skipping and unhealthy over snacking should also be evaluated. For further studies skipping meals due to unhealthy snacking and other reasons for skipping meals should also be included in the study.

Conclusion

The primary goal of this study, which was to determine the mostly skipped meal in Sri Lankan medical undergraduates and the reasons for it, was rationally established throughout, and the primary research question was satisfactorily addressed. Breakfast was the most skipped main meal among the chosen medical undergraduates. Then it was the lunch and finally the dinner. Based on the reasons the most important reason to skip meals is the classes and lecture schedules. Then comes the stress factor later the family issues and others are later. So finally, breakfast is skipped mostly by the Sri Lankan medical undergraduates mainly due to classes and lecture schedules.

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