CAREER PROFILE OF HOME ECONOMICS POST GRADUATES FROM RLAK CHE KARACHI

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Abstract

In Pakistan home economics was introduced in 1952 and graduates of this field have been entering various vocational fields. However there is a gross misconception among general public and policy makers about its vocational importance. This study was conducted to assess the rate of utilizing home economics education for gainful employment by students of Rana Liaqat Ali Khan Government College Of Home Economics Karachi who completed post graduate education from 1960 to 2006. Sample was recruited through snow ball technique and at least a few person form each year were contacted to get information about gainful employment of the respondent and their classmates. It was revealed that during all decades at least 60% of the postgraduates entered gainful employment. It is hoped that results of this study would help in clarifying misconceptions about home economics and such studies needs to be conducted on a larger scale.

Keywords: Home Economics careers, women employment, Home Economics education

INTRODUCTION

Home economics emerged as a field of study in early1800's (Stage and Vincenti 1997). The subject reached Pakistan in1950's that was just two years after the creation of this country. Four colleges were established by government of Pakistan with the financial assistance of Ford Foundation and Academic leadership from Oklahoma and Iowa State Universities of USA. All Pakistan Women Association participated in coordination and monitoring activities (Henry L 1972) . Masters education was started in early1960's with limited specialization as students opted for any three home economics subjects in year 1 and two in year 2. Till the end of 1990 the maximum enrolment allowed was 20 for master's classes. In 1991 extent of specialization and enrolment was increased to 100. Beside general subjects like Home Economics Education, Statistics and Research, students were required to take three courses in each year from any one area of specialization (RLAK CHE 2010).

As in other parts of the world (Grundy and Henry 1995;MacDonald and MacDonald 1927) Home Economics in spite of making important contributions to society did not succeed in gaining the popularity considered and deserved by Home Economists . Misconception regarding career options is one of the probable reasons (Alvi 2008; KalPoint.com 2005.) Regardless of misconception the misconceptions Home Economists continue to serve the community in most part of the world though the name of the subject is now varied in different areas. This study aimed at assessing the utilization of qualification and learning for gainful employment by home economist who graduated from this college in the past fifty years.

METHODS:

From each year one contact person who did post graduation in the particular year was identified though personal contacts. As all the teachers of Home Economics at RLAK CHE are post graduate from this college this step was not very difficult. Each contact person was given a questionnaire to fill that asked about career related details and current contact information of respondents' classmates. On the basis of these responses other alumni of this college were contacted and career related details were collected through phone email or personal visits. Overall rates of gainful employment and that form various areas of specialization were calculated.

RESULTS

Initial contacts were made with source persons for 37 years out of total of 44 years ranging from 1963 to 2006. The missing years were 1964, 1966, 1967, 1971, 1975, 1978 and 1979. On this basis 37 contact person's information about careers was retrieved from about 458 alumni. Numbers of respondents from various area of specialization were 117 from Food And Nutrition, 83 from Clothing And Textile, 50 from Family Relations And Child Development, 98 from Related Arts, 66 from Home Management and 44 from Home Economics Education.

It is to be mentioned that prior to 1991 student usually considered themselves to be specializing in the subject in which they conducted their compulsory research project.

Percentage of respondents who ever remained in gainful employment is given in figure 1. Overall nearly 80% of home economics post-graduates enter gainful employment. The percentage is relatively low for 2001-2206 as most of the fresh

alumni forms 2006 were still looking for jobs. The kind of profession in which home economists entered is given in figure 2. About two third of subjects who entered gainful employment had been teachers. Among the remaining one third dietetics (14%) and administration (11%) were the areas in which the home economists were employed. Three percent each worked a textile designer, interior designer and beautician and 2% worked for media.

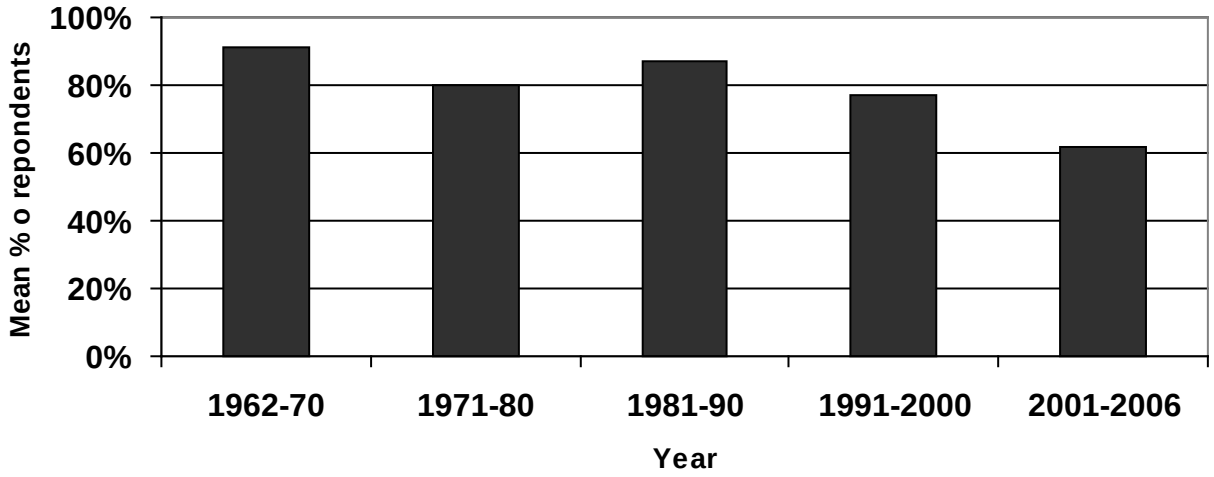

Figure 1: Percentage of post graduate who are/have been involved in gainful employment according to year of graduation

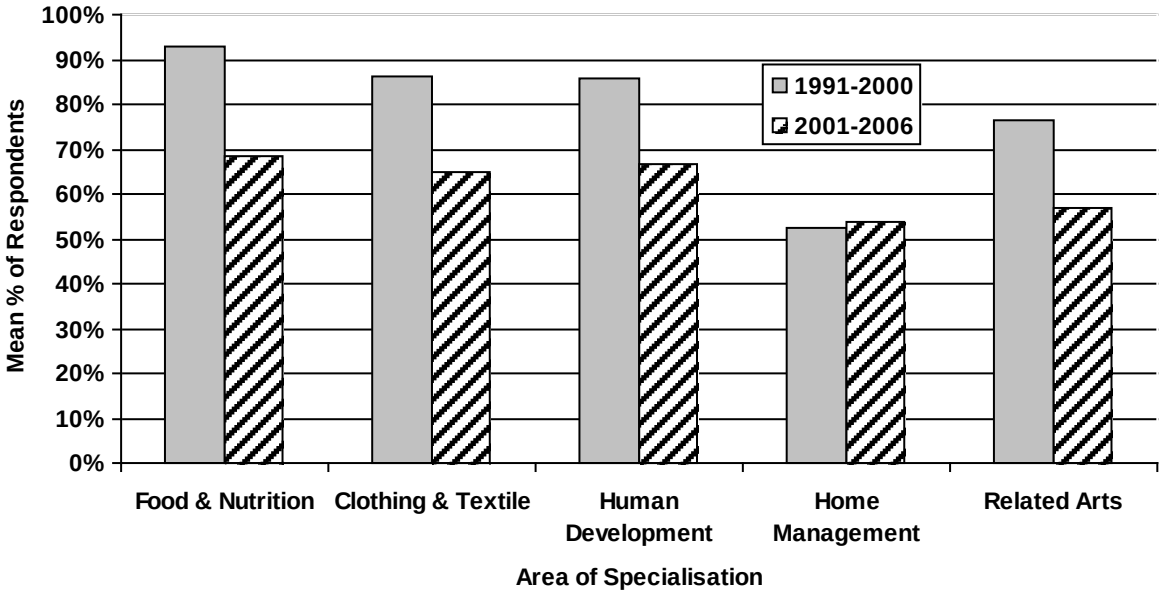

Figure 2: Percentage of post graduates with specialization who are/have been involved in gainful employment according to area of specialization and decade

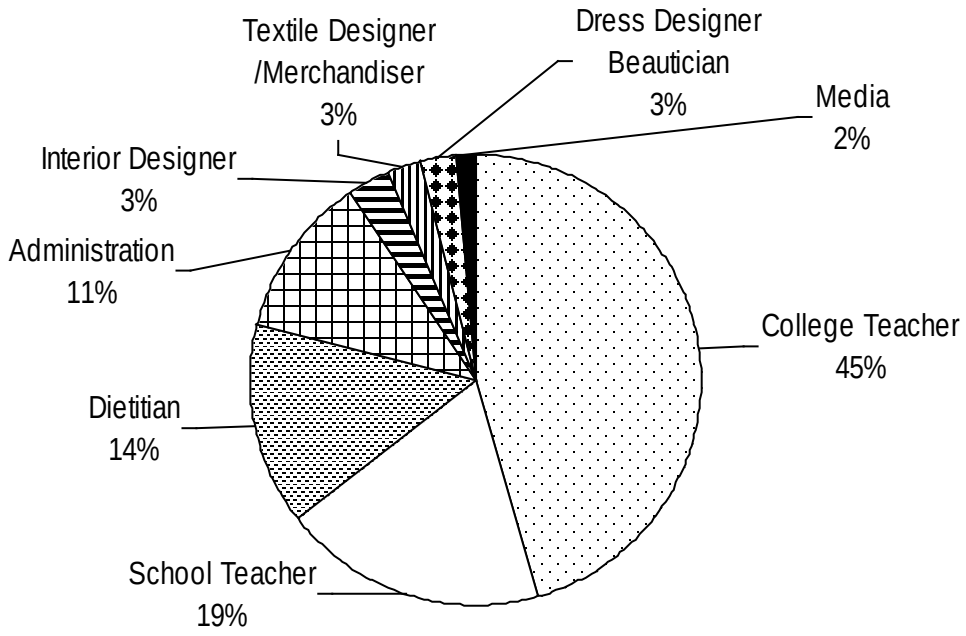

Figure 3: Percentage of employed postgraduates working in various professions

DISCUSSION

This paper explored that rate of gainful employment by home economic postgraduates and provided evidence that a vast majority of home economics graduates enter gainful employment. There are no evidence based comparable statistics available for other fields but it is estimated that rates are much higher than any other field of study in which females enter in Pakistan. For example though the female to male ratio is higher in relation to enrolment in medical colleges it is lower in relation to registration in Pakistan medical and dental council. This reflects the lack of interest of female medical graduates in entering gainful employment. This paper provides some evidence for refuting the myths that that graduates of home economics only sit at home and that the opportunities of using education for financial gains are less for graduates of home economics as compared to other fields.

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VIEWS OF DIETITIANS FOR THE NEED OF GENERIC FOOD PHOTOGRAPHIC ATLAS (PFPA)

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ABSTRACT

Two of the authors has been working for development of a food photographic atlas for use in Pakistan. In view of observations made on draft food photograph atlas authors decided to develop a generic rather than specific FPA. As food photograph atlases (FPA) are mainly used by dietitians their opinions about FPA are valuable. Thus this study was designed to find out potential for use of FPA by dietitians and their opinion about generic FPA. The data was collected through self administered questionnaire method from 30 dietitians working in local hospitals of Karachi. Respondents identified need for FPA as they mentioned encountering several problems in dietary assessment that can be resolved by using FPA. Almost all (95%) o the respondents agreed that instead using a large number of pictures o different foods only pictures o selected food can be used to represent particular shape and consistencies of foods .

Keywords: Food Photograph, Diet assessment, Dietitians, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Food photographs are very cost effective tool for increasing accuracy of assessment of food intake as well as for demonstrating food amounts (Frobisher and Maxwell 2003;Turconi et al. 2005). Use of food photographs is particularly helpful in situations where there are language and literacy limitations. However, probably due to limitations in preparation use of FPA is still very limited. A quick review of Medline indicates that in only handful of studies where FPA have been used (De et al. 2010;Foster et al. 2006;Frobisher & Maxwell 2003;Huybregts et al. 2008;Nelson and Haraldsdottir 1998;Ovaskainen et al. 2008;Robson and Livingstone 2000;Turconi, Guarcello, Berzolari, Carolei, Bazzano, & Roggi 2005). It is assumed that in dietetic practice the use would be still limited.

One of the reasons for this situation may be that the food photograph atlases aim at representing portions according to weight of particular foods and amount represented is mentioned in terms of weight. This makes use of pictures very limited and a large number of pictures are required to represent commonly consumed foods. FPA with a large number of pictures may be too time consuming to use. The large number of photographs could be used for electronic uses but for hard copies it increases both publication cost and time spent in using the photographs.

Other reasons limited use of FPAs could be that most of them have been designed mainly for uses in particular population. The rationale of selecting foods and portion sizes has been based on food consumption pattern of particular population and specific age group. Most of them have been designed for use in affluent countries and applicability in other areas is limited.

Hakeem et al initiated development of FPA for use in Pakistan and students of RLAK CHE evaluated the draft version (Razzak et al. 2011). However after experimenting with food photographs for several years the researchers decided that a generic food photograph atlas that has potential for using one food photograph for assessing intake a larger number of foods having similar appearance in terms of consistency and shape could be more cost effective and user friendly than food photographs that represent only one or a limited number of foods that are similar in weight.

Prior to development of Generic FPA this study was conducted to assess potential usefulness for dietitians in Pakistan.

The present study was planned with following objectives:

1. **To find out the tool mostly used by dietitians to assess the diet.**
2. **To find out the problem that is mostly faced by dietitians during dietary assessment.**
3. **To find out the opinion about FPA its usefulness, convenience and pattern.**

METHODOLOGY

The **present study was planned to find out the views of dietitians about development of a Food Photographic Atlas for Pakistan. The data was collected through self administered questionnaire method to find out opinions and suggestion about developing Pakistani FPA. The questionnaire comprised of questions and suggestions about the assessment tool they had been using then, what kind of obstacles they encountered during explaining the diet and its amount to patients; then which type of assessment tool are most useful and convenient in this Pakistani version of FPA. Finally their expectations about upcoming**

FPA as it could be pictures of shapes and forms representing different foods then opinion and suggestion for Pakistani FPA.

First of all pre-testing of questionnaire was helpful enough in developing the result that was required. Five questionnaires were filled to find whether collected data is well enough to give appropriate result. After pre-testing it was found that questionnaire was slightly lengthy because it has so many options; so two questions were omitted and a new question were added with limited options.

Data was collected from dietitians, for this purpose first surveyed the hospitals to meet the dietitians and gave them questionnaires to fill for an appropriate result.

Data was analyzed statistically by means of SPSS version 14.

RESULTS

Dietitians were categorized according to their length of experiences as, five years and below assumed as short experience five to fifteen assumed as medium and above fifteen taken as long. Most of the dietitians (53%) were experienced below 5 years and few were above fifteen, so we were found that mostly there are new comers in the field of dietetics.

Models representing food size (food size models) were the most frequently used tool though only 33% dietitians used it. Food pictures or Food atlas was not even ever seen by about two third of respondents (Table 1)

Table 1: Number and percentages of dietary assessment tool used or seen by dietitians.

Dietary assessment tools	Used		Seen		Neither		No response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Electronic copies of food pictures	2	6 %	7	23%	20	66 %	1	3 %
Hard copies of food pictures	7	23 %	5	16%	17	56%	1	3 %
Food size models	10	33 %	7	23 %	12	40%	1	3 %
Food photographic atlas	1	3 %	4	13 %	20	66 %	5	16 %
Actual food models	1	3 %	6	20%	19	63 %	4	13 %
Other tools mentioned by dietitians	3	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

More than 60% of the respondents had faced difficulty in understanding type and amount of food eaten by their patients.

Table 2: Problem faced by dietitians in dealing with patients

Problems	No %	Yes %	Unsure %
Could not understand the type food eaten by patients	30	67	3
Difficulty in explaining the serving size to patients.	36	54	10

To know the expectation of dietitians about upcoming pattern or presentation. They were asked that is it appropriate to include shape and consistencies of similar type of food with different portion size instead of all kind and types of food pictures in food photographic atlas for example similar type of cooked lentils could be represent by one picture, according to most of the dietitians (89%) thought that that it was a very good idea to present food pictures representing foods of similar shapes and consistencies. For representing amount of liquids cups and glasses were considered more important containers than bottles and mugs. For the assessment of similar looking solid food cubes and balls were selected by most of the respondents and some also selected rectangle shape for solid food.

Table 3: Opinion of dietitians about including pictures o selected foods in FPA based on shapes and consistencies.

Opinions	No. of dietitian	% of dietitians
Very good	13	43.3%
Good	14	46.7%
Acceptable	5	16.7%
Not acceptable	1	3.3%

Almost all the respondents viewed forthcoming FPA as very useful and convenient tool for dietary assessment and educating patients about food portions.

DISCUSSION

To change the pattern of FPA it was very important to take opinions of its users, and we found that according to 40% it's good and 45% it's

very good to include shape and consistencies of similar type of food with different portion size instead of all kind and types of food pictures in food photographic atlas. In Opinion about the presentation of FPA, most of the respondents (53%) said cups and glasses should be used for assessing the liquid food; and for the solid food shapes of balls and cubes are recommended by most of the respondents.

There is no need to collect pictures of all kinds of food items separately different shapes and consistencies of food will be enough.

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VIEWS OF DIETITIANS ABOUT PAKISTANI FOOD-BASED DIETARY GUIDELINES

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ABSTRACT

The food guide pyramid is designed to help people make healthy food choices. The objectives of this study were to determine the efficacy or applicability of food guide pyramid mentioned in food-based dietary guidelines among the dietitians and to assess the quantity of food per serving of different food groups in the Pakistani Food Guide Pyramid. The Pakistani Food Guide Pyramid was evaluated in the light of the responses by 25 dietitians. Questionnaire was used to collect data, which consisted of general information regarding usefulness, frequency, quantity, no. of servings, and suggestions regarding Food Guide Pyramid. Overall results indicated that all dietitians agreed on the usefulness of the Food Guide Pyramid. All of the dietitians were using American Food Guide Pyramid as they were unaware of the existence of the Pakistani Food Guide Pyramid. Most of them thought that the quantity and serving size mentioned in the Pakistani Food Guide Pyramid and in the American Food Guide Pyramid is appropriate. All dietitians were satisfied with the serving size, but they suggested that the Pakistani Food Guide Pyramid must also be designed according to different income levels, while all were satisfied with the no. of servings as indicated in Pakistani and American food guide pyramids.

Keywords: Dietary guidelines, Food Guide Pyramid, Pakistani diet

INTRODUCTION

A sure way to get good nutrition every day is to choose one's food according to the food guide pyramid (Taluk, H.K. & Kopan, A.O. 1977). This scientific tool makes it easy for a person to select a variety of different kinds and amounts of food. Through years of research, scientists learned that certain kinds of foods contain large amounts of one or more nutrients; they divided all foods into four groups (Williams, S. R. 1997). Presently, however, the food guide pyramid divides foods into six groups according to the nutritional contributions they make. By following the guidelines set in the pyramid, one is able to choose foods for their vitamins, minerals, as well as calorie content (Ollaway, P. B. 1993). The food guide pyramid is an outline of what to eat each day based on dietary guidelines. It is not a rigid prescription, but it is a general guide that lets people choose a variety of foods to obtain the nutrients one needs and at the same time the amount of calories required to maintain a healthy weight(United States Department of Agriculture (USDA 2005).

The major purpose of this study was to determine the usefulness and applicability of the Pakistani Food Guide Pyramid among dietitians, and also to assess the quantity of food per serving of different food items indicated in all the food groups of the Pyramid. Dietitians were using the Food Guide Pyramid published by USDA (United States' Department of Agriculture), and not the Pakistani Food Guide Pyramid published by the Nutrition Wing of the Ministry of Health, Government of Pakistan; the reason for this apparent omission being a complete absence of information regarding its very existence. There is thus a need to launch the Pakistani Food Guide Pyramid in such a way as to disseminate the information to the relevant circles so that it can be used easily by dietitians all over the country (National Institute of Health, Nutrition Division 2005).

METHOD

The focus of this study was to evaluate the Pakistani food-based dietary guideline for its efficacy of use among local population. 25 dietitians working in different hospitals of Karachi were the subjects of the study. The qualification of the subjects was a Bachelors or Masters Degree in Food & Nutrition. The selected hospitals for data collection were: Aga Khan University Hospital, Patel Hospital, National Medical Hospital, SIUT (Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation), Baqai University Hospital, Tabba Heart Institute, NICVD (National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases), Liaquat National Hospital, Park Lane Hospital, Indus Hospital, and Sindh Medical Centre. Data was collected over a period of four months through interview cum questionnaire. Prior to data collection, respondents were contacted personally and were adequately assured of maintaining confidentiality of information received. The study design as well as the questionnaire was explained to the respondents beforehand so as to maximize accuracy of responses. Data was analyzed on SPSS

(Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 14.0.

RESULTS

This study was conducted to explore the views of local dietitians about Pakistani Food Guide Pyramid (PFGP) developed by NIH of Pakistan as part of National food-based dietary guidelines. For this purpose, 25 dietitians were selected randomly from different local hospitals/medical facilities. The results of the study revealed that 92% of the dietitians were in favor of using the Food Guide Pyramid while planning the diet. However, 100% of the respondents were using the American Food Guide Pyramid in their routine work because they did not have information about existence of PFGP.

Results regarding the satisfaction of dietitians with the quantities mentioned as one serving of various foods from cereal group in PFGP are given in figure 1. All the dietitians agreed with the quantity (1 serving) of noodles and chapatti, whereas 92% agreed with the quantity of 1 cup rice; 88% agreed that 4 small rusks was an adequate serving sing size for a single serving; 84% responded positively to the quantity of 1 cup cooked cereal as 1 serving, and 91% agreed with 2 slices of bread as a single serving size.

Results regarding the satisfaction of dietitians with the quantities mentioned as one serving of various foods from fruit group in PFGP are given in Table 1.

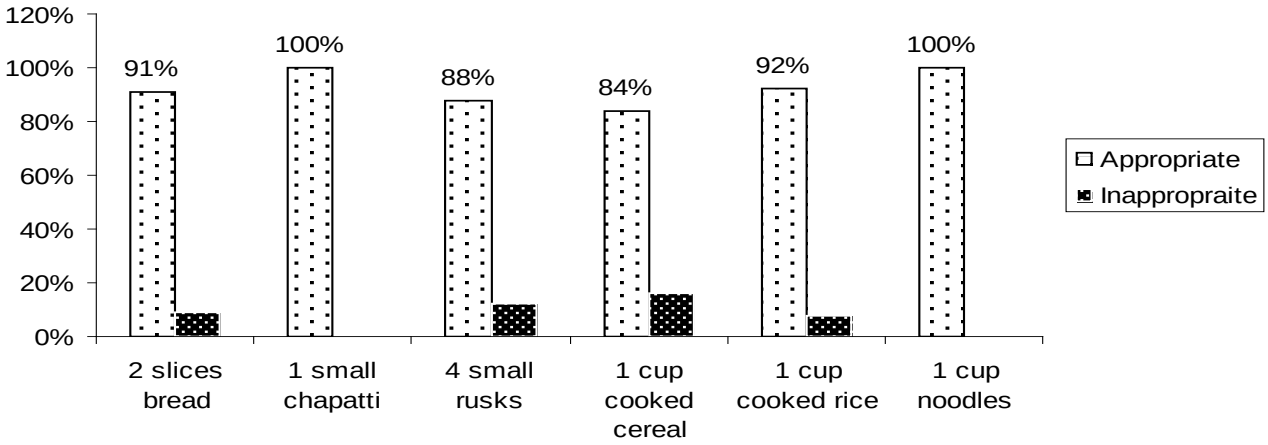

Figure 1: Percentage of respondents satisfied with serving size of cereal and cereal products

Table 1: Percentage of respondents satisfied with serving size of foods from Fruit Group

Fruit Group	**1 Serving Size**	**Appropriate** N=25 n (%)	**Inappropriate** N=25 n(%)
Fresh Fruit	1 medium	24 (96%)	1(4 %)
Dried Fruit	¼ cup	25 (100%)	0 (0%)
Fruit Juice	½ - ¾ cup	25 (100%)	0 (0%)

Table 2: Percentage of respondents satisfied with serving size of foods from Meat Group

Food Group Meat, Egg, Beans, Pulses & Nuts	**1 Serving Size**	**Appropriate Frequency** (%) N=25	**Inappropriate Frequency** (%) N=25
Cooked lean meat	50g	21 (84%)	4 (16%)
Cooked poultry	50g	21 (84%)	4 (16%)
Cooked fish	50g	22 (88%)	3 (12%)
Egg	1	21 (84%)	4 (16%)
Egg whites	2	24 (96%)	1 (4%)
Cooked legumes	½ cup	23 (92%)	2 (8%)
Nuts	30g	25 (100%)	0 (0%)

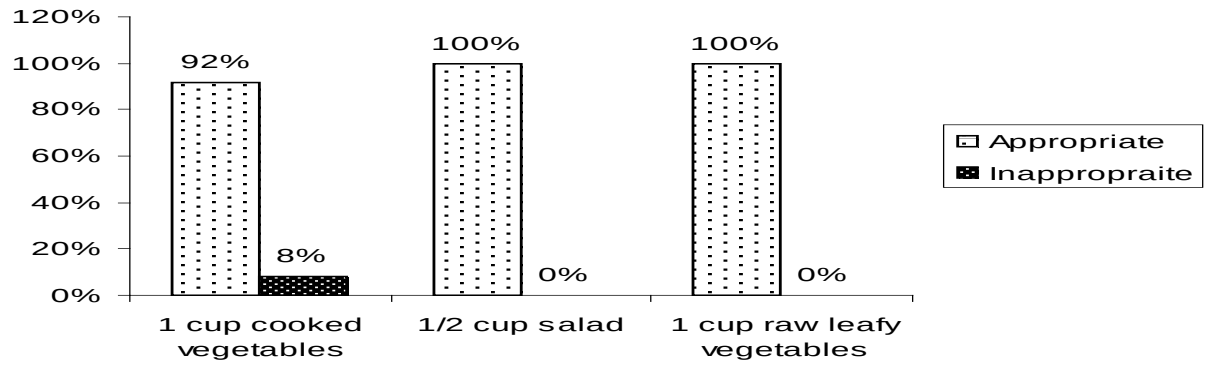

Figure 2: Percentage of respondents satisfied with serving size of vegetable group

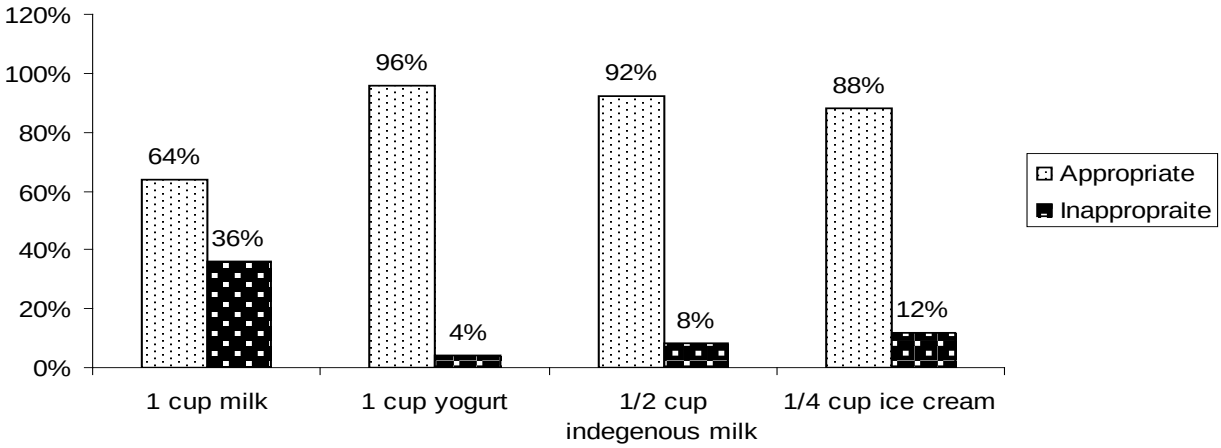

Figure 3: Percentages of serving size of milk & milk product (servings/day 2-3).

Table 3: Percentage of serving size of edible fats, oils, sugar, and salt (servings/day 2-4)

Food Group	**1 Serving Size**	**Appropriate**	**Inappropriate**
Fats, Sugar & Salt.		n (%)N=25	n (%)N=25
Oil	1 tbsp (10ml)	24 (96%)	1 (4 %)
Butter/margarine	1 tbsp	24 (96%)	1 (4 %)
Mayonnaise	1 tbsp	24 (96%)	1 (4 %)
Salad dressing	1 tbsp	25 (100%)	0 (0 %)
Sugar	Use sparingly	25 (100%)	0 (0 %)
Honey	1g	25 (100%)	0 (0 %)

All the respondents were satisfied with the quantity (1 serving) of dried fruit and fruit juices, whereas 96% were satisfied with the serving size of fresh fruits. Similarly all the respondents were satisfied with the amount of 1 serving of salad and raw vegetables, while 92% were satisfied with the quantity indicated for cooked vegetables (Figure 2).

Among meat and lentils group (Table 2) 100% of dietitians were satisfied with serving size of nuts, 96% with serving size of egg whites, 92% with serving size of cooked legumes, 88% with serving size of cooked fish, while 84% (each) of the dietitians were satisfied with serving size of cooked lean meat, cooked poultry, and egg. In relation to foods form milk group (Figure 3)96% of the dietitians agreed that serving size of yogurt mentioned in the Pakistani Food Guide Pyramid was appropriate, 92% respondents expressed satisfaction with the quantity (1 serving) of fresh milk, while 88% and 64% of the dietitians responded positively to the quantity of plain ice cream and milk respectively.

Among the foods from fats and sugar group (Table 3) 100% of the dietitians agreed with the quantity (1 serving) of salad dressing, sugar and honey, while 96% were satisfied with the quantity of oil, butter and margarine as mentioned in the Pakistani Food Guide Pyramid.

Dietitians suggested that the food guide pyramid should be according to the purchasing power or income level that people can understand easily and which helps them in the planning of a balanced meal for their families and also in purchasing the related food items. The respondents were also of the opinion that the number of servings per day of cereal and cereal products should be 4-8 instead of 5-9, and that of the vegetable group 5-6 instead of 3-5. It was also recommended by the dietitians that the quantity of fat should be mentioned separately for saturated and unsaturated fat types, and that exercise should be added in the food guide pyramid.

DISCUSSION

This study has explored the views of local dietitians about PFBGD and food pyramid. The results have also highlighted the need for appropriate dissemination for information about government publications about food and nutrition

and easy availability of these publications. Efforts of National institute of health in developing the guidelines are commendable however ignorance of almost all the working dietitian about existence of PFBDG creates concerns. Satisfaction of dietitians with contents of FBDG indicates it wide acceptability and applicability.

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