

## **Assessing Nutritional Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices and their Association with Body Mass Index Among a Group of Students at Al-Quds University**

**Iman Mansour, Njood Njoom, Afnan Ghrayeb, Hazem Agha.**

**Department of Public Health Nutrition- Faculty of Public Health- Al-Quds University.**

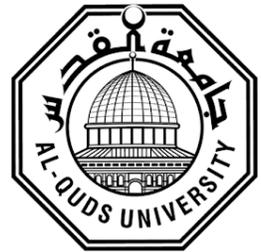
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**Background:** Good nutrition is essential for the growth, development and maintenance of health throughout life. Beyond the negative impact, malnutrition has on socio-economic development, lack of sufficient foods and quality food undermines the quality of health and the wellness of the population of all ages. Development in nutrition science has continued to show a linkage between health and nutrition since the 20th-century discovery on the consequences of malnutrition.

**Objective:** The main objective of the study was to assess the nutritional knowledge, attitude and practices and their association with body mass index among a group of students from Al-Quds University.

**Method:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted through a self-administered questionnaire given to a group of students from Al-Quds University. The questionnaire was designed based on earlier studies to meet the study objectives. The questions were translated into Arabic. The Inclusion criteria in this study included Bachelors's students from different faculties at Al-Quds University. The exclusion criteria included academic staff, pregnant and lactating females, higher studies students and administrative. The data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Software (SPSS) version 20 using descriptive statistics and Chi-square test.

**Results:** Four hundred and eighty out of 500 distributed questionnaires were returned successfully. Over half (50.2%) of them were males. 66.3% of the participants had good nutritional knowledge, 61.8% had a positive attitude regarding healthy eating and 31.2% had good practices regarding healthy eating. The demographic character was not a significant



predictor of nutritional attitude. However, there was a significant predictor between demographic character and nutritional knowledge and practices. There was a positive relationship at the level of significance p-value 0.005 or less and the alpha sign between attitude and practices, knowledge and attitude. Most of the students (53.35%) exhibited normal weight. Health professions and medical students had good nutritional knowledge compared to education science and business & economics students.

**Conclusion:** The majority of the sample had good nutritional knowledge and practices. However, most of them shown a negative nutritional attitude regarding healthy eating. The university should develop a nutritional course to be taught as a university requirement course.

**Key words:** knowledge, attitudes, practices and body mass index.