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Table of Contents

1) A REVIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SAVINGS IN RURAL FINANCIAL MARKETS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES Maiangwa, M.G.....	1
http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/joafss.v12i1.1	
2) ACCESS TO THE INTERNET FOR KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION: AGRICULTURAL RESEARCHERS' EXPERIENCE IN SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA. Adetunji, T.A and Odebode, S.O.....	17
http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/joafss.v12i1.2	
3) MANAGERIAL EFFICIENCY AMONG YAM FARMERS IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA.....	27
Akinsulu, A. A. (1), Alawode, O.O and Odusina, O. A http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/joafss.v12i1.3	
4) SLIPPING INTO AND OUT OF WELFARE: THE CASE OF COCOA FARMING HOUSEHOLDS IN NIGERIA Lawal, J.O., Omonona, B.T., Oyekale, A.S., Salman, K.K. and Oluwatayo, I.B.....	37
http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/joafss.v12i1.4	
5) APPLICATION OF GRAFTED POLYNOMIAL FUNCTION IN FORECASTING COTTON PRODUCTION TREND : A STEP TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE COTTON INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA Odedokun, V. O.....	47
http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/joafss.v12i1.5	
6) ARABLE CROP FARMERS' PERCEPTION OF AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SERVICES IN IDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE, NIGERIA.....	54
Ewebiyi, I.O. http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/joafss.v12i1.6	
7) NUTRITIONAL-RELATED DISEASES AND MANAGEMENT: NEWSPAPER EDUCATION AND DISSEMINATION.....	64
Fabiyi, E.F., S.U. Isitor, S.U., and Akande, K.E http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/joafss.v12i1.7	
8) LIMING OF ACID TROPICAL SOILS: PRACTICE, PROSPECTS AND CONSTRAINTS. Ukem, B and Tarfa, B.....	77
http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/joafss.v12i1.8	
9) EFFECTS OF SLOPE POSITION AND FERTILIZATION ON THE PERFORMANCE OF UPLAND RICE PLANTED ON INLAND VALLEY SOILS AT MINNA AND BIDA, NIGERIA.....	88
Afolabi, S. G., Salihu, M. Y. and Ezenwa, M. I. S. http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/joafss.v12i1.9	
10) EFFECTS OF POULTRY DROPPINGS AND HOUSE HOLD WASTE ON THE YIELD AND NUTRITIONAL QUALITY OF TOMATO FRUITS (<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>) Saidu, A. Bello, L. Y and Alhassan I.....	100
http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/joafss.v12i1.10	
11) PERFORMANCE OF WEANER-CALVES OF N'DAMA CATTLE FED VARYING LEVELS OF OIL PALM SLURRY AS ENERGY SOURCE Adewumi, M.K and Aderiye, J.A	107
http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/joafss.v12i1.11	
12) THE GROWTH PERFORMANCE AND NUTRIENT DIGESTIBILITY OF WILD INDIGENOUS GUINEA FOWL KEETS (<i>Numida meleagris galeata</i>) FED VARYING LEVELS OF ROASTED <i>Senna occidentalis</i> SEEDS UNDER INTENSIVE SYSTEM Yahaya, S.K., Ayanwale, B.A., A.Aremu and A.T.Ijaiya.....	114

NUTRITIONAL-RELATED DISEASES AND MANAGEMENT: NEWSPAPER EDUCATION AND DISSEMINATION

BY

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ABSTRACT

Newspapers record events on daily basis. Important events such as health, politics and other happenings, such as births, marriages and death are also recorded. This investigation identifies the newspapers that have information on health tips, these are Punch, The Nation and The Guardian. This study is designed to identify some common nutritional-related diseases and their food remedies in order to create awareness about the importance of healthy eating or dieting. This study does not involve all the information about health in all the Tuesdays and Thursdays newspapers. The papers used were those that met the interest of the researchers on nutritional diseases such as cancer, hypertension, diabetes, eye problems, arthritis and obesity and the problem of diet and nutrition. Data were collected from 20 daily newspapers that were purposively selected from the year 2012 to 2015 for the study. Data compiled were analysed using descriptive statistics and bar graph. The result revealed that the occurrence of newspaper issues on dieting and health had 43.4 percent followed by cancer 20.7 percent and diabetes and eye problems had 13.2 percent, while hypertension and obesity had 2 percent each. The study showed that many people are ignorant of the importance of eating a balanced diet and eating right to prevent nutritional diseases. This is why the newspapers topics or health tips on diet and nutrition had the highest percentage frequency, because of its importance the needed emphasis it requires. Therefore, it is suggested that government, health workers and extension organizations should create awareness and make nutritional education compulsory in schools and higher institutions in Nigeria. This will consequently, reduce the nutritional ignorance of people, the occurrence of nutritional-related diseases and death rate.

Key word: Nutritional; diseases; newspaper; education

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INTRODUCTION

Good and balanced nutrition enhances health and well-being by promoting optimal body function and preventing most common nutritional related diseases. Excessive eating of certain carbohydrate foods such as bread, cassava, yam, fatty foods and sugar could lead to a diabetic condition and obesity (Kogbe, 2008). According to Ania (2009) most diseases occur as a result of bad lifestyle and wrong diet. Attitude and habits that do not promote good health should be done away with (Adeola, 2006). According to Capstone (2005), foods that fall into category of unhealthy products are soft drinks, pastries such as cake, chin-chin, meat pie, buns, noodles, sweet, biscuit, bread and doughnuts. The list also includes red meat from beef, mutton, ham and others, are the cause of some of the nutritional diseases (Ayo-Aderele, 2013).

Good nutrition is important for growth, repair of damaged body cells and provision of energy. There are several main factors that can affect nutrition; these include occupation, economic capability, food production and ignorance about good nutrition (Dienye, 1985). Furthermore, most people are engaged in physical labour and some in sedentary jobs. Knowledge of good nutrition will help people eat right, that is to eat foods that promote good health regularly.

The problem created through food production, preservation and preparation are also part of the major causes of nutritional diseases. Crops are planted with chemical fertilizers, crop pests and insects are destroyed by the use of pesticides (chemicals) and the harvested crops, fruits and vegetables are preserved for future use with chemical preservatives (Beck, 1980; Lipton *et al.*, 2006). In a similar manner, animal production is also reared in an unnatural way and chemically loaded food sold in the market for consumption. All these after consumption manifest in various forms of diseases that sometimes lead to premature death (Beck, 1980).

Bad habit of eating for enjoyment may lead to inviting cancer and diabetes unknowingly. There are habits you drop as you grow older, so there are foods that should be off your menu as you approach your 50s (Adebayo, 2014). Prevention is better than cure (Adebayo, 2014).

Therefore, the main objective of the study is to make people see the importance of eating right diets to avoid degenerative diseases caused by wrong nutrition. The specific objectives are to:

- create awareness through extension services about causes of common food diseases and remedies;
- encourage people to stop bad food habit of eating sugar-rich foods and drinking alcohol;
- identify foods that are dangerous to health and foods that can improve one's health; and
- encourage people to read about health issues on diet and nutrition in newspapers, such as, The Nation, Punch and The Guardian and other relevant literatures.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data used in this study were mainly daily newspapers in Nigeria, bought purposely for this study. Punch, The Nation and The Guardian newspapers discuss health matters regularly, especially the Tuesdays and Thursdays papers of every week. Other relevant literatures such as: books and journals on nutrition were used to source for useful information about nutritional-related-diseases and their nutritional remedies.

Many newspapers were purchased from the year 2012 to 2015, of which 20 were purposely selected for the study. Tuesdays and Thursday newspapers that regularly write about food related diseases, diets and nutrition every week were used. The data collected were compiled and analysed.

Some health topics and nutritional-related diseases such as diet and health, cancer, diabetes and eye problems, balanced diet, arthritis, hypertension and obesity were discussed and their food remedies. Data were collected on these topics and compiled for analysis. The compiled data were analysed using descriptive statistics and graphical representation of the level of nutritional diseases in Nigeria and their food remedies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sources of information for the study were from the Nigerian newspapers; Punch, The Nation, The Guardian and journals and books. The percentage frequency distribution of sources of information used for this study is depicted in Table 1. While Table 2, presents recommended foods as remedies for nutritional diseases. The 'Four food group' for easy selection for balanced diet is shown in Table 3. Figure 1 and Table 4 shows the occurrence and percentage frequency distribution of newspaper issues on nutritional diseases and proper diet obtained in the study.

The result of the reports on diets and nutritional diseases revealed that 43.7% of the newspapers report was about the importance of diet and health. The reason why it had the highest percentage frequency may possibly be because it is a critical issue that needed more emphases. It is therefore, worth noting that taking the right diet brings about healthy living. Cancer report had 20.7% which explained that many people have died from cancer in Nigeria and that cancer can be prevented if one eats fruits and vegetable regularly. Diabetes and eye problems had 13.2% it was reported that wrong diets such as fatty and fried foods can lead to having diabetes and processed fast foods. It is also reported that diabetic condition if not checked or treated can lead to eye problems such as bad vision and blindness. Arthritis had 5.7% report from the newspapers. Fruits and vegetables were recommended and foods that contain vitamin E, for the prevention of arthritis diseases. Two percent (2%) of the newspaper reported that hypertension can be prevented through dieting. That is to avoid foods that contain much salt and processed foods. Obesity had also 2% report and that fatty foods should be avoided such as red meat, carbohydrates food and sugar. Eating more beans, fish, fruits and vegetables can reduce obesity.

Discussion

The role of newspapers in creating awareness on health and diseases

Newspapers record and expose events on a daily basis. Newspapers can be used to create awareness about health. Newspapers have been mentioned to strongly support dissemination of new technology in agriculture (Okoruwa, 2000). Besides, there are many constraints that may prevent newspapers from reaching the rural people and the poor. Creating awareness can be done by using various methods, but some are more effective than the other. Extension workers can use various methods to disseminate useful health information to reach the rural farmers and the poor. Such methods include organized meetings, workshops and group discussions.

The health of the population is a very important factor in determining the volume of output of goods and services. The capacity for productive work can be affected when the majority of the population suffers from diseases (Dienye, 1985). Several factors contribute to the development of diseases. Genes and gender plays a role but mostly what we eat contributes more to our health (Adebayo, 2015). Improving physical and mental health requires a conscious and consistent effort. There is a great relationship between what we eat and our health. Some of the diseases that are common in Nigeria include diabetes, hypertension, cancers, arthritis, obesity and eye problems (Adebayo, 2014).

Diet and health education

The quality of life is a necessity for prolonging life. Proper or balanced diet is the key to longevity. Dieting is the practice of eating foods that keep one in good health regularly (Gbenga-Mustapha, 2014). According to Okonkwo quoted by Gbenga-Mustapha (2014) the right and adequate diet has a remarkable influence on longevity. Educating people on what to eat can be very important in preserving lives, as many people do not know how to eat right. Okonkwo quoted by Gbenga-Mustapha (2014) quoted an Egyptian proverb which says that 25% of what people eat keeps them alive, while the remaining 75% keep their doctors alive. "Four food group" can be used to prepare balanced diet (Table 3).

The Gbenga-Mustapha (2014) reported that Nigeria has lost great men and women in their prime to diseases that can be easily treated or remedied by eating right. Common health problems such as cancer, diabetes and prostate enlargement, as well as stroke, high blood pressure (HBP) and stress can be remedied by proper nutrition and good eating habit.

Nutritional diseases that are common among growing children are caused by protein-calorie malnutrition such as kwashiorkor, marasmus and ricket. The major cause of protein-calorie-malnutrition is associated with poverty, ignorance, poor food, custom, infection and worms (Byrne and Benneth, 1973). It is also of paramount importance to consider nutrition for the elderly. Elderly people should have good nutrition. The problems of the elderly include eyes, ears, feet (arthritis) and mental confusion problems (Byrne and Benneth, 1973).

They need less carbohydrate and protein foods because they perform less activity. According to Bryne and Bennett (1973) a good mixture of varieties of dark green leafy vegetables in the diet will help in the prevention of old age related health problems. Light diets such as cereal, pap, oats, beans, fish, chicken meat and soya cheese are also good for the elderly.

In Nigeria, not only the elderly are suffering from eye problems, children and other adults are equally affected. Adebayo (2014) reported that over one million Nigerian adults are blind, while additional three million are visually impaired. The main reason for this condition is wrong diet and ignorance. Adebayo (2014) reported that the international Diabetes Federation estimated that 40% of the 382 million people suffering from diabetes do not know they have it, this is what is increasing the population of the blind in the world.

Nutrition-related diseases

1. Diabetes:

Diabetes mellitus is a syndrome in which the basic defect is the absence or shortage of the hormone called insulin. According to Isiauwe (2013), there are three types of diabetes: Type 1, Type 2 and gestational diabetes. She explained that in Type 1 diabetes, the body does not produce insulin and people develop it before 40 years. She further noted that Type 1 diabetes is not as common as Type 2 diabetes. In Type 2 diabetes, the body does not produce enough insulin for proper function or the cells in the body are insulin resistant. Approximately 90 percent of all cases of diabetes worldwide are of this type (Isiauwe, 2013). The third type is gestational diabetes which affects females during pregnancy. Some women have very high levels of glucose in their bodies and their bodies are unable to produce enough insulin to transport all of the glucose into their cells. This hormone is carried by the blood to the kidneys where it limits the outflow of water in the urine (Oyekole, 2012).

Diabetes symptoms: Blurry vision, fatigue, urinating often, excess thirst, hunger and weight loss. According to medicalnewstoday.com quoted by Isiauwe (2013), that overweight and obese people have a much higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. The chances of developing the disease also increases as one gets older.

To avoid having diabetes, eat organically produced foods, fruits and vegetables, avoid highly processed meat, choose 100% whole grain bread. Ayo-Aderele (2013) stated that eating of orange and banana peels could lower bad cholesterol levels. Adebayo (2014) suggested the replacement of eating of bread with eating more beans, in order to avoid health problems as people grow older in age.

Consultant endocrinologist (diabetes care specialist Dr. Sharon Amuwa quoted by Punch (December 9, 2014) stated that individuals with high blood sugar (diabetes) have a 50% high risk of developing eye problems compared to those with normal blood sugar levels. This is due to the strong relationship between diabetes and the nerves of the eyes.

2. Hypertension

Hypertension, also referred to as high blood pressure, is a condition in which the arteries have persistently elevated pressure. Whenever the human heart beats, it pumps

blood to the whole body through the arteries (Carretero and Oparil, 2000). A number of factors are known to increase blood pressure. They include obesity, high alcohol intake, high salt intake, aging, sedentary lifestyle, stress, low potassium intake and low calcium intake (Carretero and Oparil, 2000).

It was reported in Punch by Adebayo (2014), that the conventional spices that many people use in cooking may expose them to diseases like hypertension which are associated with increased salt intake. According to consultant cardiologist Akinsanya (Punch, December 18, 2014), stated that more than 90% of the spices sold in the markets have been processed with a lot of salts and other harmful chemicals.

3. Cancers

This is a serious disease in which growth of cells, also called cancer form in the body and kill normal body cells. It is a dangerous disease that spreads quickly in the body (Hornby, 2000). Colon cancer only becomes deadly when detected late (Ashiru, 2015). Adepoju (2015) reported that poor eating habit can trigger the disease, that many people do not know what to eat to prevent having the disease. The report further explained that being inactive may trigger the disease as it can make people become obese and consequently put people in danger of some cells becoming cancerous. According to Livingstone quoted by Fabunmi (2013) faulty metabolism triggered by faulty eating is the fundamental cause of cancer. A woman's risk of breast cancer rises dramatically with her intake of meat, eggs, butter and cheese according to Linda, University of California, USA quoted Fabunmi (2013). Several studies have revealed that regular consumption of fruits and vegetables can reduce cancer risk (Beck, 1980, Chu *et al.* 2002, Sun *et al.* 2002).

Findings from research studies have shown that populations whose diets are high in fruits and vegetables and low in animal fat, meat and calories have reduced the risk of some of the most common types of cancer (Steinmetz and Potter, 1991; Willett, 1994; International Agency for Research on Cancer, 2003; Liu, 2004).

According to Doll (1992) about 35 percent of cancer deaths in the United States were associated with diet. While in Nigeria eighty thousand people die yearly from cancer (Jimoh, 2012). More importantly, positive dietary behaviour, such as, increasing intake of fruits, vegetables and whole-grains and related lifestyles is a natural strategy for considerably reducing the occurrence of cancer (Liu, 2004). Appropriate diet and lifestyle changes are necessary for prevention and healing of cancer. It was reported Ofomata, (2013) that giving cancer patients foods that triggered their ill-health in the hospital or at home can lead to an early grave.

The United States is one of the two countries having the highest incidences of breast cancer globally despite annual mammography starting at age 40 for American women (Ofomata, 2013). 'According to Professor Margaret Kripe quoted by Ofomata (2013) that 1,500 people die of cancer in US everyday. Recently, the World Health Organisation (WHO) warned that cancer rates could further increase by 50% to 15 million new cases in the year 2020. This projection is based on the World Cancer Report. In the year 2000, it was 10 million (Ayo-Aderele, 2014). Fruits and vegetables which contain phytochemicals of health benefits in reducing the occurrence of cancers and chronic diseases are namely: pineapple, banana, apple, lemon, spinach, red pepper, carrot, cabbage, potato, mango, lettuce and cucumber. Others are orange, pear, grapefruit, pumpkin, papaya, watermelon and tomato (Chu *et al.*, 2002; Sun *et al.*, 2002).

4. Arthritis

Arthritis is a group of conditions involving damage to the joints (Gbenga-Mustapha, 2014). Arthritis is the main cause of disability among people over 55 years in industrialized countries, but in Nigeria as young as 12 years are being diagnosed with arthritis (Gbenga-Mustapha, 2014). According to Elegbuo quoted by Gbenga-Mustapha, (2014), most types of arthritis are caused by a combination of factors. These can include genetic makeup, a physically demanding job, previous injury, infection or allergies, obesity and certain foods. The most common forms of arthritis are osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, infectious arthritis and juvenile rheumatoid arthritis.

Arthritis sufferers include men and women children and adults. Approximately 350 million people worldwide have arthritis. More than 27 million Americans have osteoarthritis. Americans also suffer from rheumatoid arthritis. More than half of those with arthritis are under 65 years of age and nearly 60% of those with arthritis are women (Gbenga-Mustapha, 2014).

Elegbuo, suggested that sufferers of arthritis should always be active, and that people should fight of arthritis with herbal plants. A recent study found that the addition of an antioxidant mixture or Vitamin E alone to a standard treatment regimen for rheumatoid arthritis improves symptoms. (Okubena, 2014).

5. Obesity

This is a state of being very fat in a way that is not healthy. Obesity can increase the risk of heart disease (Hornby, 2000). Obesity can also cause high blood pressure. Excess carbohydrates are converted into fat and stored in the body. In the extreme case, this excess can lead to obesity or overweight (Anyakoha and Eluwa, 2008). Having a big belly increases the risk of death in heart attack survivors according to research presented at ESC Congress (2013) by Prof. Simon and Prof. Danchin from France (Ofomata, 2013). Being overweight is a significant risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes (Adebayo, 2014). Obesity is one of the leading direct and indirect causes of ill health and death among the general population all over the world. A potbelly results from continuous deposit and accumulation of fat tissue in the inner organs and the intestines to such a degree as to have negative impact on the general health (Adebayo, 2015).

In the year 2012, more than 40 million children under the age of five were overweight (obese). Seventy million children under five will be obese by 2025 if current trends continue (WHO) (Ayo-Aderele, 2014). According to Agbeye quoted by Ayo-Aderele (2014) "those who are watching their weight must avoid fortified foods. This is because fortified foods hardly satisfy and they are more calorie-dense than natural foods. The more the calorie you eat the more likely it is for you to gain weight." Prevention saves life and money, but chronic conditions require costly treatment.

6. Eye problems

Eye problems can happen through various causes. According to Amuwa quoted by Adebayo, (2014) undetected and unmanaged diabetes can lead to vision problems such as cataract, glaucoma and a condition known as retinopathy. Ofomata (2013) reported that researchers have discovered that extracts from bitter kola, garden egg and pepper fruit have shown promise as the next best eye drugs in town. That eating pepper fruits also could decrease the risk of blindness caused by glaucoma. Vitamin A is necessary for the health of mucous membranes of the eye.

Diet: Foods to avoid for healthy living

There are many things to avoid in order to live a healthy life. It is beneficial avoid foods that will cause damage to your body systems. 'Too much protein is bad (especially

red meat) and can cause damage to your body. 'Consume more plant foods as much as possible for your protein intake' (Adebayo, 2014). Dairy is a known allergen that causes inflammation and arthritis symptoms. Caffeine is linked to joint pain. Saturated fats are found in animal products especially beef and pig meat and these contribute to weight gain, putting additional stress on joints. Trans fats are processed vegetable fats; they cause weight gain and carry free radicals that damage the body. They have been linked to cancer, diabetes and heart disease (Adebayo, 2014).

Table 1: Percentage frequency distribution of sources of information used for the study

Newspapers/others	Frequency	Percentage %	Cumulative
Punch	14	35.0	35.0
The Nation	5	12.5	47.5
The Guardian	1	2.5	50.0
Journals	11	27.5	77.5
Text books	9	22.5	100.0

n=40

Table 2: Recommended foods as remedies for nutritional diseases

Nutritional Diseases	Food Remedies
Diabetes	Avocado pear, broccoli, peanuts, cocoa drink, guava leaf, beans prune juice, apples, lettuce and moringa leaf
Hypertension	Carrots, guava leaf, moringa leaf, garlic, olive oil and sweet potato
Cancers	Dark green vegetables, carrot juice, wheat bran, cabbage, moringa, bitter leaf, tomato, mango, pineapple, banana, apple lemon, spinach, red pepper, potato, mango, lettuce, cucumber, papaya, watermelon, pear, grapefruit, pumpkin and orange.
Arthritis	Fresh raw fruits and juice, foods that contain vitamin E and moringa leaf
Obesity	Regular food should be beans, wheat bran, oat, banana and other fruits and vegetables.
Eye problems (Poor vision, glaucoma, cataracts etc)	Sweet potato, carrot juice, liver, bitter cola moringa leaf, cod liver oil and garden egg.

Table 3: The 'Four food group' for easy selection for balanced diet

Nutrients	Food sources	Functions in the body
Carbohydrates	Yam, rice, bread, cassava, potato, maize, corns, rice, other grains, beans.	Supply energy to the body for strength.
Proteins	Meat, eggs, fish, milk, beans, soya beans, cheese, and other pulses.	Build and repair the body cells.
Fats and oil	Groundnut oil, soya oil, palm oil, butter, margarine, fish oil and animal fats.	For body heat and energy.

Vitamins (A, B, C, D, E, K) and minerals	Cod liver oil, liver, eggs, milk, margarine, carrots, tomatoes, cabbage, oranges, pawpaw, peas, lettuce, other fruits and sea foods.	For metabolic processes and protection from diseases.
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Table 3 shows the "four food group" that can be used to prepare balanced diet. That is one or two foods must be selected for meal preparation from each nutrients.

Table 4: Occurrence and percentage frequency distribution of newspaper issues on nutritional diseases and proper diet

Problems and diseases	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Diet and health	23	43.4
Cancer	11	20.7
Diabetes & eye problems	7	13.2
Balanced diet	5	9.4
Arthritis	3	5.7
Hypertension	2	3.8
Obesity	2	3.8

n = 53

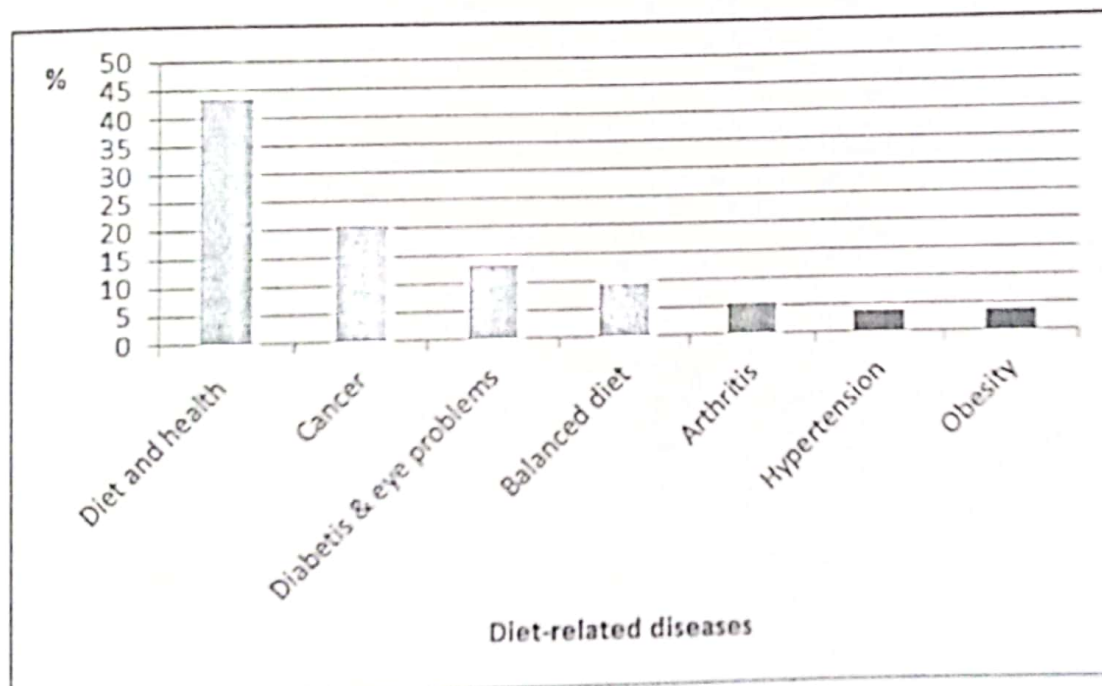


Figure 1: Percentage frequency distribution of newspaper issues on nutritional-related health problems, diet and nutrition

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

A disease is cured by removing its cause or causes. There are crucial and deliberate steps to be taken in order to guard against cancer and other nutritional related diseases. Findings from research studies have shown that regular consumption of different varieties of fruits and vegetables can promote health and well-being of people (Beck, 1980, Ayo-Aderele, 2013). Okubena (2014) advised that a healthy diet should be

70 percent alkaline and 30 percent acidic. Alkaline foods are foods which are still in their natural state (that is raw and fresh). The Harvard School of Public Health (SPH, 2004) quoted by Kogbe (2008) said that although good nutrition is essential for health exercise has protective effects against many serious diseases. When we eat much more than our sedentary life requires we store fat and gain weight (Oyekole, 2012).

It must be noted that it is not in every case that all the symptoms are present in a patient. It is important to be tested in hospitals or diagnostic centres in order to confirm whether a patient is diabetic or have any other diseases or not. Many people do not care to care for their health or embark on natural lifestyle, forgetting that the time required is less than the time one would spend at the hospital or clinic, when one fall sick. Prevention is better than cure.

Recommendations

Many books about health matters have been written, newspapers discuss health matters every week. Similarly, magazines and other literature do the same thing. However, the solution to nutrition-related problems is to include nutritional education in the school curriculum from primary school to tertiary institutions and this should be made compulsory. Not many people can read or buy newspapers and health books to solve their health problems, extension services can be used to disseminate health information to the masses.

Using the "four food group" makes it easier to be able to prepare balanced diet. We need to eat meals from the different food nutrients in this group for healthy living. This involves choosing food stuff from each of the nutrients in Table 3. There are several other food groups such as 3 food groups, 4 food groups and 5 food groups. The use of these groups depends on your level of understanding of food and nutrition and amount to be used or eaten. Therefore, the knowledge of food nutrition is very important for both men and women including youth and children.

In addition, teaching our children about health and the right diet will pay dividends in their older years. Youngsters with the right information about healthy behaviour are less likely to suffer from these nutritional- related diseases. In addition, regular screening and adopting healthy food habits matters a lot (Ayo-Aderele, 2014). It is of paramount importance that the government, health workers or health practitioners and the general public take urgent action in order to address this issue. Necessary action can also be taken through the campaign by extension workers, health seminars on television and radio can also go a long way in disseminating information about eating right. If these adequate actions are taken many nutritional-related diseases will be prevented and consequently reduce untimely death.

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