
Assessment of Consumer's Awareness about Food Adulteration and its Harmful Effects in the Body

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Abstract

Adulteration of food cheats the consumer and can pose serious risk to health. Mere visual inspection does not serve the purpose especially when adulteration has assumed high degree of sophistication. Consumer awareness is the remedy for eliminating the evil of adulteration and sale of substandard food article.

The study was conducted in Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh to assess the awareness about adulteration in food items and its harmful effects in the body. Urban area of Lucknow district was selected with a sample of 300 women respondents who headed their family. The data were collected with the help of pre-structured questionnaire personally by the researcher. It was found that majority of consumers had low awareness scores for adulteration in different food stuffs. There were only two food items i.e. cereals and milk for which high scores were reported by 7 (2.33%) and 1 (0.33%) consumers respectively. Regarding harmful effects of adulteration, majority of consumers were seen to be having low awareness about these. None of the consumers had high awareness scores about harmful effects of adulteration for any of the food stuffs. All the consumers had low score of awareness for harmful effects adulteration of fat. Mean scores of consumers ranged from 1.00 ± 0.00 to 1.03 ± 0.17 .

Keywords- Adulteration; Harmful effects.

Introduction

Food is the basic necessity of life. One works hard and earns to satisfy our hunger and relax (enjoy) later. But at the end of the day, many of us are not sure of what we eat. We may eating a dangerous dye, sawdust, soapstone, industrial starch and aluminium foil and so on.

In our daily life, we come in contact with dozen of unhygienic and contaminated food products which put really bad effect on our health. Most of these food products just mix up into our daily food and contaminate our health. Even the common food, which we eat, is adulterated. Now a question arises that what is adulteration? An adulterant is a chemical

substances which should not be contained within our food, beverage, and fuels. Adulterants may be intentionally added to more expensive substances to increase visible quantities and reduce manufacturing costs, or for some other deceptive or malicious purpose. Adulterants may also be introduced into food products by accidentally or unknowingly. The substance, which lowers or degrades the quality of food material, is called an adulterant.

It is common in almost all developing countries. And it's ugly face is come in the form of its harmful effects as stomach disorder, giddiness and joint pain, diarrhea, liver disorder, dropsy, gastrointestinal problems,



respiratory distress, oedema, cardiac arrest, glaucoma carcinogenic effects, paralysis etc.

Methodology

On the basis of pilot study, three hundred families were selected. This study was conducted in urban area of Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh state. Urban areas of Lucknow district were selected randomly and

purposely on the basis of availability of sample from household. The data of sample drawn by women who headed their family. This study was conducted for three months to assess the consumer's awareness about food adulteration and its harmful effects in their body. The pre-designed and pre tested questionnaire used for collection the data.

Result

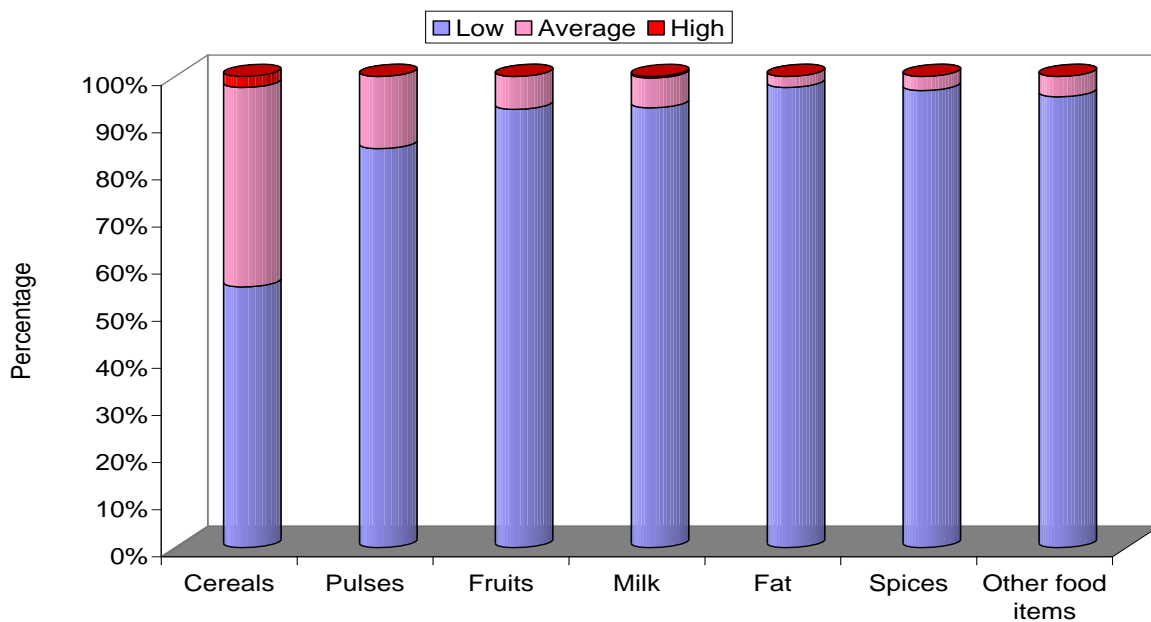
1. Level of awareness about adulteration in food stuffs

In this study, regarding awareness of adulteration in food items it is found that majority of consumers had low awareness scores for adulteration in different food stuffs. There were only two food items *i.e.* cereals and milk for which high scores were reported by 7 (2.33%) and 1 (0.33%) consumers respectively.

Table 1: Level of awareness about adulteration in food stuffs

(N=300)

S.No.	Item	Level			Mean Score±SD
		Low (Score 1)	Average (Score 2)	High (Score 3)	
1.	Cereals	166	127	7	1.47±0.55
2.	Pulses	254	46	0	1.15±0.36
3.	Fruits	279	21	0	1.07±0.26
4.	Milk	280	19	1	1.07±0.27
5.	Fat	293	7	0	1.02±0.15
6.	Spices	291	9	0	1.03±0.17
7.	Other food items	287	13	0	1.04±0.20



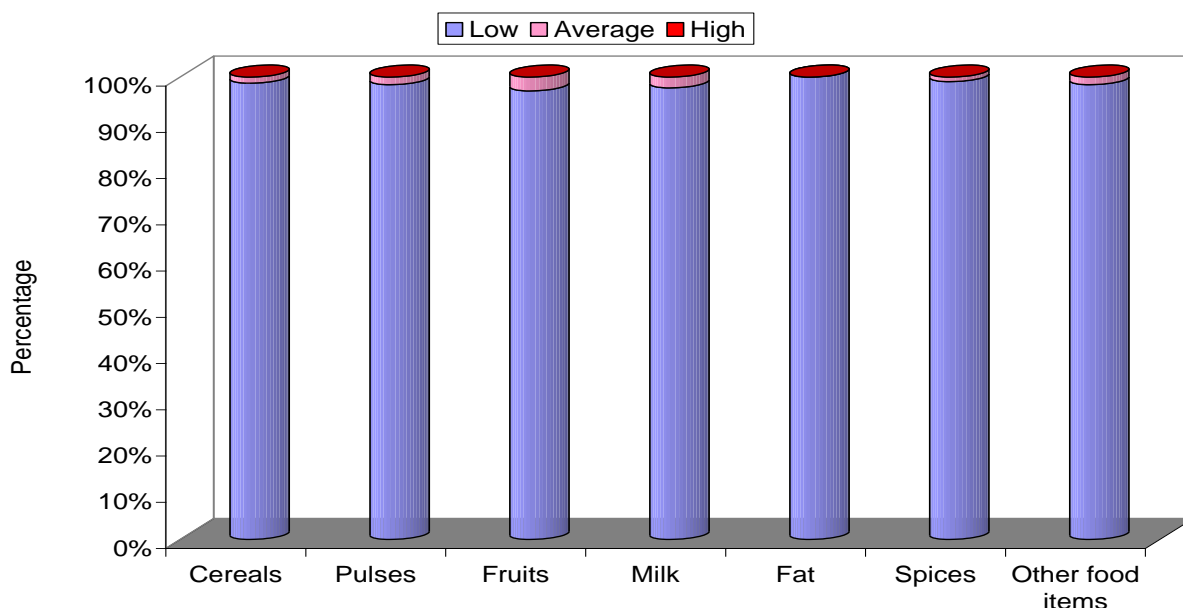
*Low= <25%
 *Average= 25-75%
 *High= >75%

Mean awareness scores were maximum for cereals (1.47 ± 0.55) and minimum for fat (1.02 ± 0.15). According to **Nidhi Gupta & Priti Panchal (2009)** Regarding Consumer awareness the result depicted that majority, that is, two third of the respondents were moderately aware about the rights and responsibilities related to food quality and food adulteration. **Kalyan Bagchi (2000)** revealed that respondent's awareness related to food adulteration were poor.

2. Consumer awareness regarding harmful effects of adulteration On evaluating the level of awareness regarding harmful effects of adulteration, majority of consumers were seen to be having low awareness about these.

Table 2: Level of awareness regarding harmful effects of adulteration (N=300)

S.No.	Item	Level			Mean Score \pm SD
		Low (Score 1)	Average (Score 2)	High (Score 3)	
1.	Cereals	296	4	0	1.01 ± 0.12
2.	Pulses	295	5	0	1.02 ± 0.13
3.	Fruits	291	9	0	1.03 ± 0.17
4.	Milk	293	7	0	1.02 ± 0.15
5.	Fat	300	0	0	1.00 ± 0.00
6.	Spices	297	3	0	1.01 ± 0.10
7.	Other food items	295	5	0	1.02 ± 0.13



*Low= <25%
 *Average= 25-75%
 *High= >75%

None of the consumers had high awareness scores about harmful effects of adulteration for any of the food stuffs. All the consumers had low score of awareness for harmful effects adulteration of fat. Mean scores of consumers ranged from 1.00 ± 0.00 to 1.03 ± 0.17 . **A. Noman Mohammad Atahar. Ali (2013)** said that World Health Organisation (WHO) has expressed its anxiety about the impact of food safety upon public health in Bangladesh in its website. It reveals that unsafe food can be a significant reason of many chronic and non-chronic diseases including but not limited to diarrhoea, cancer, heart diseases, various kidney diseases and birth defects.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that majority of consumers had low awareness score about adulteration in food items and its harmful effects in the body.

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