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#### FOOD HABITS AND NUTRITION BEHAVIOR OF GERMAN AND AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENT

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The investigation of the food choices and nutrition behavior of college students are significantly important in the light of some reports of growing patterns of obesity, high blood pressure and serum cholesterol in young populations. These patterns suggest that there is a great need for exploring the dietary habits and food choices among young people and providing appropriate intervention. This project is therefore intended to study food choices and dietary practices among young adults attending colleges in Germany and the US and to discuss the possible factors that may influence these choices. Demographic data, anthropometric measurements, and food records were obtained from students enrolled at Montclair State University (MSU) in New Jersey, USA and Karlsruhe University (KU) in Karlsruhe, Germany. Eighty students at MSU and forty students at KU completed their 3-day diet records. The mean age  $\pm$  standard deviation of the subjects were  $22 \pm 4.0$  (MSU) and  $22.5 \pm 2.0$  (KU) years with 53% (MSU) and 85% (KU) engaged in moderate activities. The mean BMI for the MSU students was  $23.3 \pm 5$  and for the KU students was  $21.4 \pm 2.6$ . Food and diet analysis of the 3-day diet records indicated that the consumption of plant-based foods, particularly vegetables and fruits was far below the recommended amount for this age group. The mean number of daily servings for the MSU students was  $1.9 \pm 1.7$  vegetables vs. 4 recommended servings and  $1.81 \pm 1.5$  fruits vs. 3 recommended servings. For the KU students the vegetable consumption was  $161 \pm 91$  grams/day vs. 375 g recommended daily and for fruits the consumption was higher at an average of 401 grams per day. It appears that women students included more vegetables in their daily food patterns. Students consumed enough animal products and meat foods. It is apparent that college students are not consuming the recommended quantities of plant-based foods and particularly young men are consuming very few servings of vegetables per day. This is may be the result of the campus environment, which does not promote good nutrition and healthy life styles. Wise food choices influence a person's overall health throughout life. Furthermore, this research will help to develop effective nutrition education programs for healthier future generations.

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## Abstracts

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