



Effect of Paleo Diet on the Indian Population

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to estimate the effect of paleo diet on the Indian population and determine the current knowledge on the same and to create awareness on paleo diet. The Paleolithic diet is called the paleo diet, caveman diet or stone-age diet is based mainly on foods presumed to be available to Paleolithic humans. Like other famous diets, the paleo diet is promoted as a way of improving health. Limited data exist on metabolic effects on humans eating the die, though the available data suggest following this diet may lead to improvements in terms of body composition and metabolic effects as compared to the typical western diet. The diet is a fast growing trend and hence changes and awareness have to be made. Even though the diet is very diverse, most people don't follow correct diet patterns and tend to eat the wrong food. Therefore, it is imperative that awareness is generated about the diet.

Keywords: Paleo diet, Paleolithic diet, Indian population.

INTRODUCTION

The paleo diet or the Stone Age diet is one of the most common diet fads currently.¹ The diet remains controversial because of the exaggerated claims of its effectiveness against fat loss amongst wellness bloggers and celebrity chefs, and the continuous evolutionary discordance hypothesis on which it is based.² The paleo diet primarily consists of foods presumed to be available pre neolithic revolution. This commonly includes raw fruits and vegetables, organ meat, red and white meat, nuts. The diet is void of all foods found post neolithic revolution. This includes foods like agricultural products, dairy products, processed foods, sugar, coffee and alcohol.³ The diet is somewhat higher in protein and fat content, relative to other conventional diets. The first idea of a 'paleo diet' can be traced to the story of Joseph Knowles, a 44 year old professional illustrator from Maine, who set off into the New England wilderness on August 10, 1913 to conduct an experiment.⁴ Naked and entirely without supplies or any kind of equipment what so ever, Knowles hoped not only to survive for two months without human contact, but also to share his journey with the public through periodic tree-bark correspondences to the Boston Post.⁵ Donned the "Primitive Man" by the newspaper, Knowles' wilderness diet consisted of berries, trout, and various small animals. He even claimed to have killed a bear with only a crude club during the experiment's second week. For clothing, Knowles wore animal hides and fashioned sandals from strips of moist bark.⁶ When he emerged from the forest on October 4th, the tan and thickly bearded voyager received a hero's welcome from the citizens of Boston. His subsequent memoir, 'Alone in the Wilderness', sold over 30,000 copies, and the "primitive man". Despite questions of the experiment's validity the

adventure, Knowles swore that the wilderness journey substantially improved his overall health: among his claims were that he lost weight and significantly gained muscle, his complexion improved, his digestion regulated and he acquired the ability to push his body to the limits.⁷

In 1985, Dr. Melvin Konner took a critical look at the Stone Age Diet is Melvin Konner, he and fellow physician Stanley Boyd Eaton attracted significant scientific and medical attention to the concept of Paleolithic nutrition through their article publication in The New England Journal of Medicine. Entitled "Paleolithic Nutrition: A Consideration of Its Nature and Current. He proposed that the Paleolithic diet was infect a high protein, high fat and low carb diet and can prove to be an extremely effective diet. Today, there are various different "meal plans" and some of the aren't purely paleo.⁸⁻¹⁰

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A survey was conducted by means of circulating an online questionnaire and 100 responses are obtained, tallied and analyzed. The questionnaire comprised of 15 questions which aimed at assessing the population's current knowledge on the composition of the diet. The questionnaire also contained questions which aimed to assess the effectiveness of the paleo diet among the general population. The questionnaire was circulated amongst a population that primarily consisted of college going students.

RESULT

84% of the participants were under the age of 20 and 56% of them were females. Out of these participants, only 49% knew about the paleo diet and about 13% had an arbitrary idea about it.



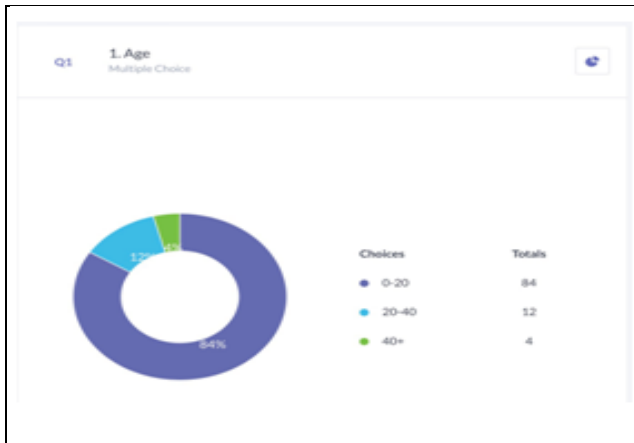


Figure 1: age

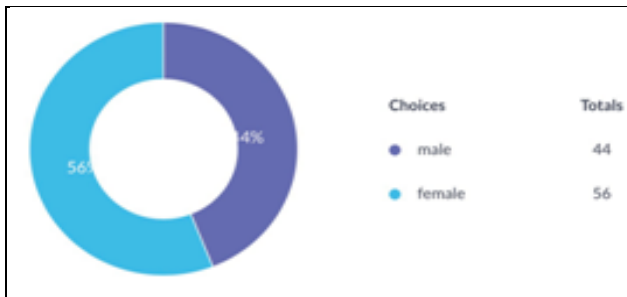


Figure 2: Sex

About 76% agreed that the main composition of the diet was proteins, followed by fats and carbs.

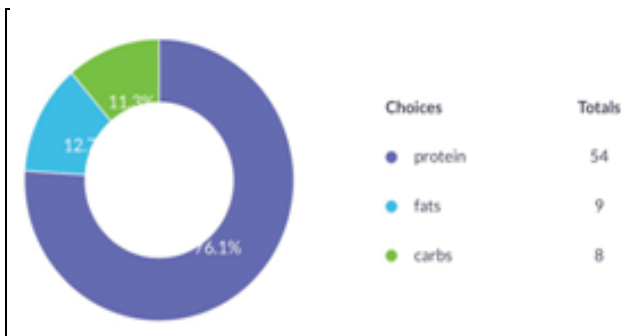


Figure 3: Composition

Roughly 38% agreed that white meat was the primary source of proteins followed by 33% agreeing that red meat was the chief protein source. Roughly 18% agreed that organ meat was the chief source of protein.

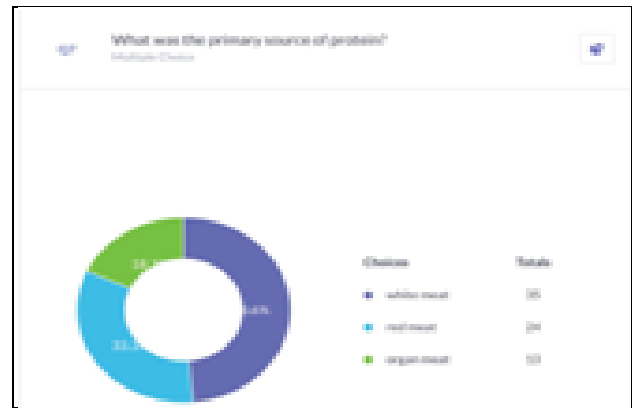


Figure 4: Chief Protein Source

35% of the participants agreed that the primary fat source was nuts, followed by 32% saying that eggs were the primary source. Roughly 20% believed that olive oil was the chief fat source.

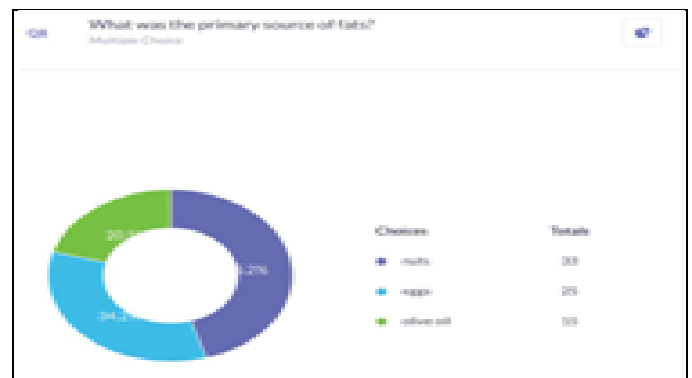


Figure 5: Chief Fat Source

37% believed that carbohydrate consumption was not required, where as 38% and 23% believed it was okay to consume carbs in the form of wheat and rice and starchy vegetables respectively.

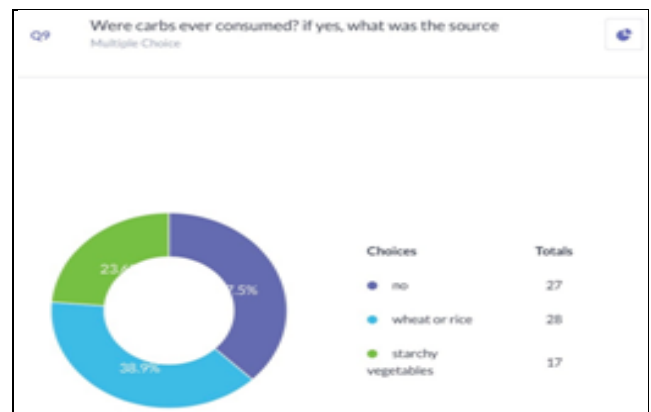


Figure 6: Carbohydrates

On average, around 77.6% of the population lost less than 10 kilograms, followed by 15% losing more than 10 kilograms and about 8% not losing any weight.

Out of the 92% who lost significant weight, only 45% stayed the same while 39% put on weight once the diet was stopped. 15% of the participants lost further weight.

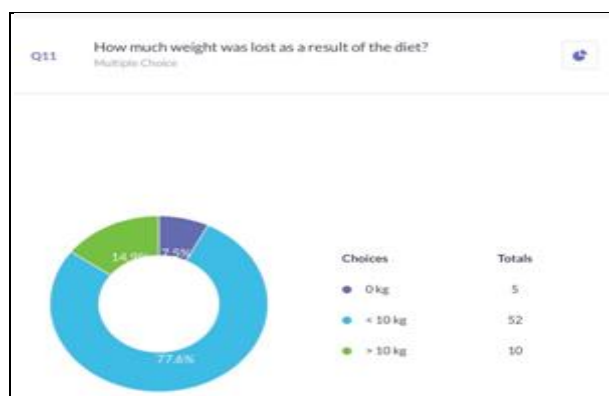


Figure 7: Weight Loss

DISCUSSION

Lot of the participants had an arbitrary idea about the diet but didn't have an accurate understanding about it. They primarily believed that red and white meat were the main sources of protein but, an original paleo diet would encourage the consumption of organ meat first, followed by white and red meat. Also, a sizeable chunk of the participants believed that carb consumption was not necessary. But actually, a sound paleo diet includes a minimum carbohydrate aspect in the diet as it is an essential component required for our well-being.¹¹

The diet proved effective as most of the participants lost a significant amount of weight; unfortunately most of them regained that weight as soon as they discontinued the diet.

CONCLUSION

It is very easy to say that a large amount of the general population is not very aware of the pale diet and even those who have heard about it, aren't familiar with the intricacy of the diet. Originally, the diet was "regional specific" i.e. the people ate whatever was available naturally in their surroundings. Hence, it is safe for us to adopt a paleo diet specifically structured for us, which

cater to our nutritional needs (high protein, moderate fat, low carbs) from the available food sources around us. Also, lots of awareness needs to be created amongst the general public about the paleo diet.

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