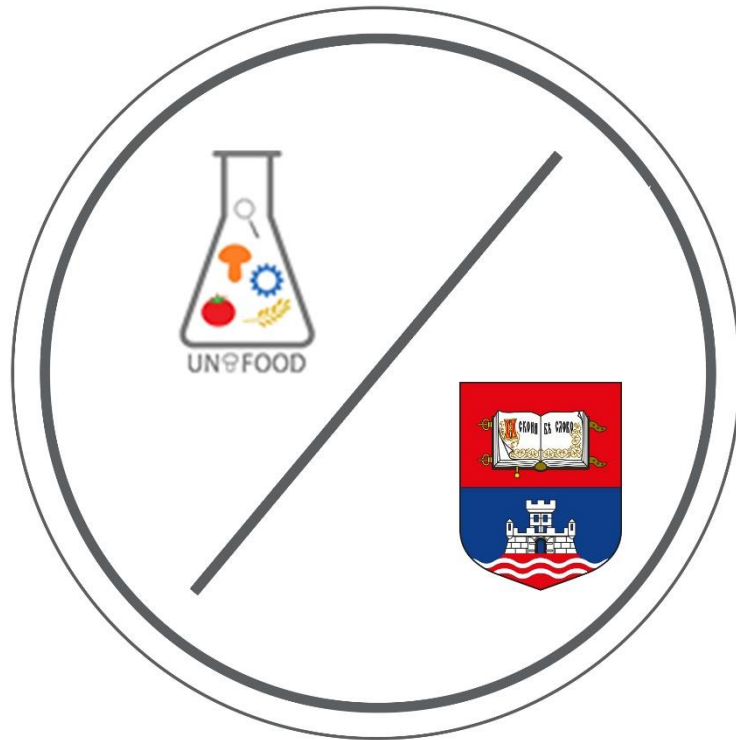


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KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND DIETARY PRACTICES OF PHARMACY STUDENTS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF NUTS CONSUMPTION

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Nuts are nutrient-dense foods with complex matrices rich in unsaturated fatty acids and other bioactive compounds. Numerous reported health benefits of nuts may be attributed to their unique nutrient profiles and synergistic interaction of their constituents, including macronutrients, micronutrients and phytochemicals. The objective of this study was to explore pharmacy students' nuts consumption practice, as well as their attitudes and knowledge concerning nuts nutritional and health properties. A cross-sectional survey based on the online self-administered questionnaire, was conducted in September 2020. Among respondents (n=136, 90.4% female and 9.6% male, mean age 23.7±2.0 years), more than half agreed or strongly agreed that regular consumption of nuts might have beneficial effects on health, including reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease. Furthermore, the majority of participants perceived nuts as healthy sources of proteins and monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. The most common reason cited by respondents for eating nuts were taste (80.2%), followed by health effects (53.1%) and nutrient profiles (45.0%). The most commonly consumed nuts among pharmacy students were almonds (35.2%) and peanuts (28.4%), followed by hazelnuts (19.1%) and walnuts (15.6%). Based on self-reported data, students predominantly consume raw nuts (54.0%) as a snack between meals (78.5%). Nutrition-related courses within the faculty curriculum were the main sources of acquiring information regarding the beneficial effects nuts exert on health outcomes. Although certain gaps in knowledge were determined, in most senior students, the attitudes and dietary practices regarding the consumption of nuts were at an adequate level. Nevertheless, expanded efforts and additional educational programs may be useful in strengthening the capacities of these future health professionals for providing adequate nutrition advice and proactive advocacy of nuts health benefits.

Keywords: Nuts, Attitude, Knowledge, Dietary practice