



EFFECTS OF NUTRITIONAL INTERVENTION AND COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING OF SCHOOL CHILDREN'S

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to review existing literature about past research that highlighted studies concerning nutrition and its relationship to brain function, cognition, learning, and social behaviors. There is evidence that school breakfast and lunch programs are not up to par with current Indian nutritional norms and standards and that USDA standards may not be utilizing the latest research about nutrition. Studies have shown that proper nutrition has a direct effect on student performance and behavior in school. Much of the literature reviewed in this article confirmed that nutrition has a direct effect on neurotransmitters which are important in sending messages from the body to the brain. Specific dietary components were shown to have negative effects on this system, many of which are commonplace in school-aged children's daily eating. Unfortunately, school breakfast and lunch programs, in many cases, inhibit the body's cognitive and energy potentials by not providing proper nutrition. The problem has also added to the obesity rate amongst Indian students, which also has added to the lower achievement in school. In many studies, cases of socioeconomic status seem to be an indicator of food insufficiency, which is simply the lack of available food to a household. Food insufficiency has been shown to directly affect children's cognitive development. What schools can do to improve upon existing nutritional conditions is a focus of the latter section of the paper. Many schools across the nation have invested in nutrition by way of enhanced breakfast and lunch programs. Some have even gone so far as to grow fresh produce in school gardens. Finally, recommendations are explored and given for ways schools can help improve the nutrition of their food programs, thus taking steps to ensure students are given the energy needed for normal cognitive development and social skills.

Key Words: - Nutrition, Cognition, Development, School, Skills, Children, Health.