

Abstract

Relationships between Parental Feeding Practices and Consumption of Vegetables and Fruits—The Perspective of Two Generations[†]

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Abstract: Background and objectives: Eating behaviors are formed during childhood; therefore, parental practices play an important role in shaping them. The objective of this study was to determine the association between mothers' childhood food experiences (CFE), parental feeding practices (PFP) towards their own children aged 4–10 years, and consumption of fruit and vegetables among children and mothers. Methods: A total of 260 women with at least one child aged 4–10 years participated in a cross-sectional study carried out in 2021–2022. The questionnaire consisted of questions from the Adults' Memories of Feeding in Childhood (AMOFiC) questionnaire and the Comprehensive Feeding Practices Questionnaire (CFPQ). They contain statements describing similar family situations and feeding practices, with responses ranging from never/disagree (1) to very often/agree (5). The AMOFiC includes the option "I don't remember". The consumption of fruit and vegetables was assessed based on the frequency of consumption and number of servings. Descriptive statistics, the Chi2 test, and the Pearson correlation coefficient were used in the statistical analyses. Results: Positive correlations between the frequency of eating and the intake of vegetables (0.532 and 0.485, respectively) and fruits (0.597 and 0.410, respectively) have been found in both mothers and children. Positive correlations were found between CFE and PFP, such as the use of weight control restrictions ($r = 0.527$) and modeling ($r = 0.230$), whereas monitoring practices and experiences were not correlated (0.098). Children's fruit and vegetable intake correlated positively with monitoring (0.396 and 0.287, respectively), modeling (0.278 and 0.286), and involvement (0.205 and 0.156). Their fruit and vegetable intake correlated negatively with food rewarding (-0.167 ; -0.317), whereas vegetable intake correlated with emotion regulation (-0.283). Mothers' fruit intake correlated positively with experiencing food restrictions only in childhood (0.229). Conclusions: Mothers' CFE may induce similar practices when raising their children, including restrictions to control child weight and modeling. PFP such as modeling, monitoring, and involvement promote higher consumption of fruit and vegetables in children; however, using food as a reward and emotion regulation was linked to lower intake. The relationship between mothers' CFE and PFP confirms the intergenerational transmission of parental food-related practices.

Keywords: food consumption; children; parental feeding practices; food experiences



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