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Received 16 December 1996; revised 15 July 1997. Available online 12 April 2002.

Abstract

The aim of this study was to measure the prevalence of teenage vegetarianism and associated food habits and beliefs. Two thousand senior secondary school students (mean age 16 years), from 52 schools in South Australia, participated in a two part survey. The findings show that teenage vegetarianism is primarily a female phenomenon, ranging in prevalence, according to definition, from 8 to 37% of women and 1 to 12% of men. Support for vegetarian practices was high especially from mothers (63%) and classmates (46%). Generally, “teenage vegetarians” consumed fewer red meats than non-vegetarians but ate more chicken. They cited health, animal welfare and environmental reasons in support of their habits. The importance of operational definitions of vegetarianism is emphasized and the findings are discussed in relation to likely motivational influences.

^{*1} The authors would like to thank Joanne Smith and Jenni Proeve for their help in the collection and entering of the data, and MRC Australia for their generous support.

Appetite

Volume 30, Issue 2, April 1998, Pages 151-170