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**HYGIENIC ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION
ON PUBLIC HEALTH**

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Relevance. At present, the widespread consumption of fast food products and the growing demand for them have become one of the major hygienic problems affecting public health. In particular, the increasing intake of fast food among young people and the working-age population raises the risk of obesity, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus, gastrointestinal disorders, and metabolic disturbances. The high caloric value of fast food products, along with their excessive content of fats, salt, sugar, and artificial additives, makes their hygienic assessment a pressing issue. Therefore, studying and evaluating the impact of fast food consumption on public health from a hygienic perspective is of significant scientific and practical importance.

Keywords: Fast food, hygienic assessment, public health, unhealthy diet, obesity, nutrition hygiene, risk factors.

Introduction. At present, the proportion of fast food products in the dietary structure of the population is increasing significantly. Urbanization processes, the acceleration of work and educational activities, and the reduction of time allocated for meals have led to a growing demand for ready-to-eat and fast-prepared food products. However, the widespread consumption of fast food requires a thorough investigation of their hygienic safety and their impact on public health [1,6,7,9].

Fast food products are generally characterized by high energy content and an excessive amount of fats, salt, and easily digestible carbohydrates. Their composition is often deficient in biologically active substances, particularly vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber. This situation disrupts the balance of the diet and may impair metabolic processes in the body [4,5,8].

From the perspective of hygiene, dietary factors are recognized as one of the key determinants of public health. Regular consumption of fast food increases the risk of obesity, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus, gastrointestinal disorders, and other chronic pathologies. Moreover, violations of hygienic standards during the preparation, storage, and sale of these products exacerbate food safety risks [2,3].

The Aim of the Study. The main aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive hygienic assessment of the impact of fast food consumption on public health. The research focuses on determining the level, frequency, and types of fast food consumption, analyzing their compliance with food safety and hygienic standards, and evaluating the influence of their compositional characteristics—such as energy value, fat, salt, carbohydrates, and nutrient content—on public health indicators.

Additionally, the study assesses the role of fast food consumption in the development of obesity, metabolic disorders, cardiovascular diseases, and gastrointestinal

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conditions from a hygienic perspective. Based on the research findings, the study aims to identify the main risk factors associated with fast food consumption, evaluate the population's dietary culture and hygienic knowledge, and develop preventive and sanitary-educational recommendations aimed at promoting healthy eating habits. [7].

Recommendations

1. In order to reduce fast food consumption among the population, it is necessary to widely promote the principles of healthy nutrition, with particular emphasis on strengthening educational activities among children, adolescents, and young people.
2. It is recommended to organize regular sanitary and educational programs on nutrition hygiene and rational nutrition in educational institutions (schools, colleges, and higher education institutions).
3. Sanitary and hygienic control should be strengthened at fast food production and retail facilities, ensuring strict compliance with existing hygienic standards regarding product composition, preparation technology, storage, and sales conditions.
4. To prevent foodborne illnesses, it is essential to assess epidemiological risks associated with fast food products and enhance preventive measures.
5. It is recommended to promote healthy alternative dietary options (traditional foods, vegetable-based and protein-rich products) and ensure their economic affordability.
6. Regular dissemination of information through mass media and social networks about the negative health effects of fast food and the benefits of healthy nutrition is considered an effective preventive measure.
7. The results of this study can be used as a scientific and practical basis in the activities of sanitary-epidemiological services, for improving regulatory documents related to nutrition hygiene, and for developing programs aimed at strengthening public health.

Conclusion. The conducted hygienic analyses demonstrated that regular and excessive consumption of fast food products has negative effects on human health. The high caloric content of these products, along with excessive amounts of fats, salt, and easily digestible carbohydrates, disrupts the balance of the diet and increases the risk of obesity, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus, and gastrointestinal disorders. In addition, the low biological value of fast food products and their failure to fully meet hygienic requirements were identified, confirming that their impact on public health represents a significant hygienic concern.

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