

# The influence of age regarding dietary choices of Indian immigrants in the United Kingdom

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Migrants are relatively healthy upon arrival in the host country, but over time their health deteriorates, and many of them acquire non-communicable diseases, leading to higher mortality rates compared to the host population<sup>(1)</sup>. Dietary choices of immigrant populations have a great impact on their health status. Identifying the issues related to dietary choices and patterns bears a great significance for health promotion. This study aimed to explore the dietary choices and the influencing factors behind those choices in Indian immigrants in the UK.

A purposive sampling method was used to select participants based on identified independent variables such as age, religion, socio-economic factors, and gender. Semi-structured, one-to-one interviews were conducted, and detailed information about dietary choices and influencing factors were collected from eighteen Indian immigrants in the UK. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and thematically analysed, following Braun & Clark's six steps guide<sup>(2)</sup>.

Several preliminary themes, such as age, time constraints, taste preferences, convenience, increased availability of ready to eat food, and influence of globalisation, were identified. Age emerged as a major theme associated with influencing dietary choices. Many participants reported cutting down on or skipping meals with progressing age in an effort to lose weight or overcome a health problem. "I never had weight issues per se, but since going menopause I have cut down on the amount of food that I consume. Three have gone to two meals, and a small snack". Some participants mentioned reducing meat intake for health reasons. "I used to eat a lot of red meat, but I am cutting down now. Obviously, age now, you have to look after yourself".

This research suggests that Indian immigrants become more cautious about their dietary intake with advancing age and associated health issues, in agreement with a Canadian study that also exhibited improvement in South Asians immigrants' dietary practices with growing age and length of stay in the host country<sup>(3)</sup>. This indicates that immigrants get motivated to improve their dietary patterns with progressing age, as health risks are more tangible in this age group. Subsequently, immigrants are more likely to be receptive to healthy eating interventions at this age. Therefore, an individually tailored, cultural, and age-appropriate nutritional education program could benefit the healthy ageing of the Indian immigrant population living in the UK.

## References

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