

ABSTRACT

Soft drinks are consumed as the third most beverages globally. The diet-related health problems such as non-communicable diseases are increasing intensely in worldwide. Studies on the prevalence of soft drinks consumption and their associated health effects have not been extensively documented in Myanmar. A cross-sectional study with mixed-methods was used to assess the awareness, perception and factors influencing on soft drinks consumption and labeling. The pretested, self-administered questionnaire was used among 254 B.Comm.H students and 6 in-depth interviews were performed in University of Community Health, Magway, during September to December 2018. Majority of students were in the aged 18 years and below (65.4%), male (68.1%), single (99.6%) and living with friends (85.4%). All students (100%) took soft drink within last 3 months. Diabetes type II is the most reported adverse effect of soft drinks consumptions. Only (43.7%) of students had good awareness and (45.3%) had good perception on soft drinks consumption. Significant association was found between awareness and age group and gender ($p=0.023$, 0.020), perception and age group and educational level ($p=0.007$, 0.043) and awareness and perception on soft drinks consumption ($p=0.00$) respectively. The most consumed and like most on soft drink was energy drink; the main reasons were to be alert (61%) and being tired (58.7%). Most of them were taking soft drinks together with friends (91.1%). The proportion of habit to read soft drink labels was 73.6%. Short and simple labelling was reasons for choose than other brand name easily. New brand name (52.8%) and price (51.2%) motivated the students to read soft drink labels. The main reasons for not reading labelling information include don't understand language (44.5%). Socio-demographic characteristics were not statistically associated with awareness and perception on soft drink labelling, however there was significantly association between awareness and perception on soft drink labelling ($p<0.001$). In qualitative findings, most of students reports that difficulties encountered in reading soft drink labelling are small font size printed on food labels, language barriers, unclear view of date marking, too much information and use of technical terms. Therefore, it is important to provide health education and intervention program about health effects of soft drink consumption and importance of reading food labelling.