

Changes in Lifestyle and Food Group/Nutrient Intake During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Effects of Working From Home

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Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 transformed lifestyles worldwide. Under the first state of emergency declaration in Japan, from April–May 2020, the use of public facilities, such as restaurants, was restricted or suspended, and telecommuting and staggered work schedules were increasingly promoted. This study explored how individuals' dietary habits were affected by lifestyle changes, such as working from home, primarily during the COVID-19. The data for this study were collected using an online questionnaire survey targeting individuals mainly in their 20s–60s from 23 wards of Tokyo and government-designated cities across Japan. The first survey (Phase 1) was conducted immediately following the end of the state of emergency declaration in May 2020. The second survey (Phase 2) was conducted in November 2020, six months after the declaration was lifted. We compared the dietary habits of individuals in Phase 1, during which many remained isolated at home due to restrictions under the emergency declaration, and Phase 2, during which the range of external activities had relatively expanded. Moreover, factors that led to dietary changes were analyzed using a first difference seemingly unrelated regression model.

The results indicated that the number of days spent working from home is correlated with the frequency of food delivery, thereby revealing a positive effect on eggs and carbohydrates intake and a negative effect on alcohol intake. Furthermore, we confirmed that an increased demand for fresh food stores during the emergency declaration led to increased intake of healthy foods, such as vegetables, seafood, proteins, and dietary fibers, in addition to increased intake of unhealthy foods, such as tasty beverages and salt equivalents.

Key words: COVID- 19, Working From Home, Food Groups, Nutrients, First Difference Seemingly Unrelated Regression