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Survey research of convenience store usage for lunch among college students and nutritional examination of convenience store box lunches

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[Aim] Convenience stores are popular for quick food such as box lunch and rice ball in Japan. In order to obtain the lunch habit of college students, we conducted questionnaire survey for convenience store usages. Additionally we examined the nutritional values of convenience store box lunches as a part of the study whether student's diet meet the Dietary Reference Intakes for Japanese.

[Methods] Subjects were 450 college students (male 27, female 422) with two colleges in Tokyo. The questionnaire consisted twelve items concerning lunch including healthy diet awareness and convenience store usage. For box lunch, 37 kinds were examined with its nutritional labeling.

[Results] For lunch at campus, 58% of students brought the lunches from home, 25% bought at the convenience store, and 14% ate at the cafeteria. The most popular choices at the convenience store were rice balls (66%) and breads (56%). The ratio of male students chose cup-noodles was 22.2%, significantly higher than female. Regarding the side dishes choice of box lunch, 44% picked deep-fried chicken, 23% teriyaki-meat, and 20% hamburger steak, the meat dishes were preferred. The maximum salt amount of box lunches was 7.1g and the mean was 3.7 ± 1.2 g, thus some of them contains more than recommended daily intake value.

[Conclusions] Although the subject students knew vegetable and small amount of salt are important for healthy diet, they chose lunch with less vegetable and much salt. We learned that further consideration is necessary when purchasing lunch at convenience store to correspond with nutritional requirement.