



UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES "KING MIHAI I" FROM TIMISOARA

"YOUNG PEOPLE AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH IN APPLIED LIFE SCIENCES"

13-14 November 2025

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES ON DIET AND CANCER PREVENTION

Maria-Daniela IONESCU¹, Nicoleta IANOVICI^{2*}

¹Department of Biology, Faculty of Chemistry, Biology, Geography, West University of Timișoara, Romania

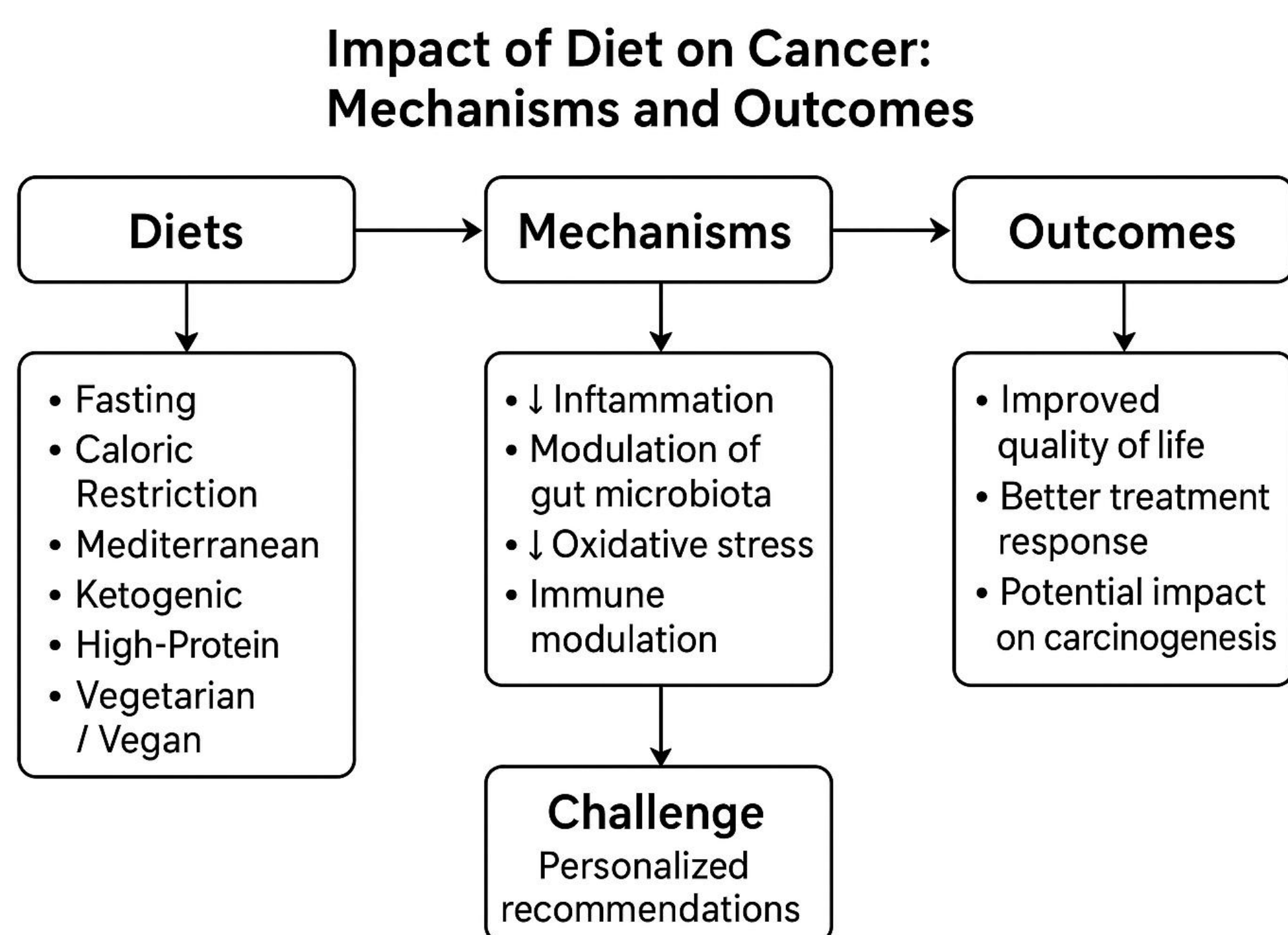
²Department of Biology, Faculty of Chemistry, Biology, Geography, West University of Timișoara, Romania
Institute for Advanced Environmental Research, Environmental Biology and Biomonitoring Research Center



"Young people and multidisciplinary
research in applied life sciences"

Abstract: The main objective of this study was to evaluate the level of knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding the role of diet in the prevention and evolution of cancer among students and academic staff from the Faculty of Chemistry, Biology, Geography (CBG) at the West University of Timișoara. The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire with 33 items, adapted from a previously proposed model, and organized into three sections: Knowledge (true/false and multiple-choice items), Attitudes (Likert scale), and Practices. Data collection was carried out online in June 2025, ensuring anonymity and informed consent. The data were statistically analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Most respondents acknowledged the essential role of nutrition in cancer prevention and management; however, specific information regarding the diets discussed in the literature was less familiar, which suggests the need to integrate nutritional education into the training of future biologists and biochemists. The statistical analysis revealed a significant difference between students and academic staff only with respect to dietary practices.

Introduction



Materials and methods

The study assessed the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of students and teachers at the Faculty of Chemistry, Biology, and Geography, West University of Timișoara, regarding diet and cancer prevention. A 33-item online questionnaire, adapted from Sasanfar et al. (2022), covered knowledge, attitudes, and dietary practices. The sample included bachelor's and master's students and teaching staff.

Results and discussions

The T-test revealed a significant difference between the two groups only for the "Practices" dimension, while for "Knowledge" and "Attitudes" the differences were not significant ($p > 0.05$). This result suggests that only in the case of food practices is there a relevant variation between the groups analyzed. The level of knowledge and attitudes remains comparable between students and teachers. Young people and adults perceive and apply information about nutrition and cancer risks differently. Young people tend to have greater access to information via the internet and social media, but often do not filter scientific sources from commercial or unvalidated ones. Adults are more receptive to medical information and may have a stronger understanding of the link between diet and cancer risk, especially if they have relatives or friends affected (ENG et al, 2020; HAMMOUH et al, 2023).

T-test results

Size	T test
Knowledge	0.35
Attitudes	0.31
Practices	0.014

Figures 1-10 show the percentage distribution of the responses of the members of the two groups (in blue - TRUE, in red - FALSE, in orange - I DON'T KNOW).

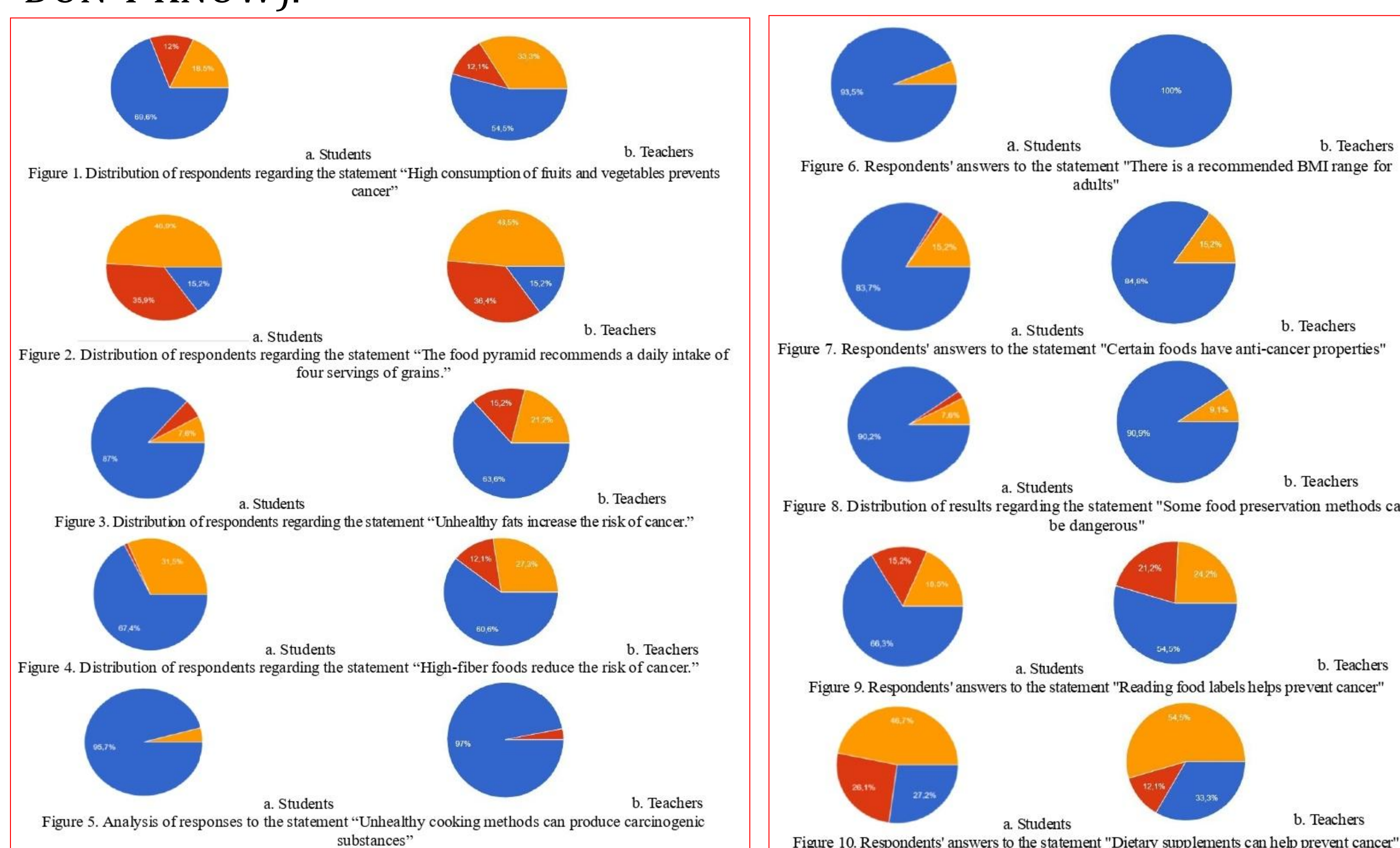


Table 1. Descriptive data on the results obtained for the three dimensions of the questionnaire - **students group**

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation	ANOVA test results - Sig.
Knowledge score	.55	2.00	1.4891	.32002	.661
Practice score	1.00	3.00	1.7370	.37875	.771
Attitude score	2.43	4.07	3.2578	.35184	.710

Table 2. Descriptive data on the results obtained for the three dimensions of the questionnaire - **teachers group**

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation	ANOVA test results - Sig.
Knowledge score	.36	2.00	1.4215	.38086	.108
Attitude score	2.63	4.06	3.3542	.30844	.667
Practice score	1.30	4.50	3.7030	.57199	.252

Conclusion

Although there is evidence of diets benefits as adjuvants in cancer treatments, these do not replace medical therapy, but can support it under controlled conditions. The responses collected from students and teachers showed a moderate level of knowledge about the link between diet and cancer, but also an openness to adopting healthier eating habits. Most respondents recognize the essential role of nutrition in cancer prevention, but details about the diets studied in the literature are poorly understood.

Statistical analysis revealed a significant difference only in eating habits between students and teachers, according to the T-test. knowledge and attitudes did not show significant differences. These results show that, although perceptions of the importance of nutrition are relatively uniform, the actual application of healthy habits differs between groups. Overall, the findings highlight awareness of the risks associated with an unhealthy diet and acceptance of the idea that nutritional habits can influence the onset and progression of cancer. The results support the need to promote nutrition education and healthy eating in public health policies, actively involving nutrition and medical specialists.