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Title: Dietary practices of quota and non-quota students at a Brazilian public university

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College students' dietary practices are not well known and there are no studies relating their diet after implementing quota system policies for being admitted into college. This study aimed to describe the dietary practices of students at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), Brazil, and to examine them according to the means by which they were admitted to the university (quota (low socioeconomic status associated to other demographic characteristics) and non-quota students). A cross-sectional study was conducted with 1,336 undergraduates that entered at UERJ in 2011. A self-administered questionnaire that focused on the habit of eating breakfast and substituting lunch and/or dinner with snacks and regular consumption (≥ 5 days a week) of markers for healthy and unhealthy eating was used. Analysis of the association between means of admission to the university and dietary practices was done using univariate and multivariate logistic regression models (adjustment for sex and age). Significant proportions of the students did not eat breakfast; substituted dinner with snacks; did not eat fruits, vegetables and beans regularly; and frequently consumed sugary beverages, sweets, cookies and packaged salty snacks. Compared to non-quota ones, greater proportions of quota students regularly consumed beans, cookies and packaged salty snacks and lower proportions of this group substituted dinner with snacks and consumed vegetables and fruits. Quota and non-quota students had similarities in their dietary practices that were unhealthy. Except for bean consumption, the differences observed between the two groups were more unfavorable to quota students.