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**INTERMITTENT FASTING AS A FOOD HORMESIS.
IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING AND STRENGTHENING HEALTH**

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Relevance. In the modern world, great attention is paid to the issue of nutrition, because it influences our well-being, energy level, productivity and the quality of life. There are a large number of different types of nutrition, such as fractional, separate nutrition, vegetarianism, eating raw food, high-frequency nutrition, Ayurvedic nutrition. Nowadays one of the most popular principles of nutrition is intermittent fasting, which consists of eating at certain intervals.

Aim: to identify the effect of periodic fasting on the physiological processes of the human body.

Materials and methods. The methods of comparative analysis and a sociological survey conducted among students of the Faculty of Pharmacy in the winter of 2023 were used in the work. The data obtained were statistically processed and structured with the help of the Microsoft Office Excel 2007 computer program.

Results and their discussion. 154 respondents participated in our research. Among them there were 123 women (79.8%), 31 men (20.2%); students aged under 18 — 15 (9.7%), aged 18 to 24 —

132 (85.4%), aged 25 to 34 — 4 (3.9%), aged over 35 — 3 (2.1%). The results showed that 5.9% had never heard about intermittent fasting, 62.5% had heard about it, but were not interested in this issue, 33.2% were sufficiently aware of the effects of this principle of nutrition. 31.3% of the interviewed people had tried periodic fasting; 67.9% of them had observed weight loss; 17% had noted an improvement in the quality of sleep; 8.2% had found an improvement in general well-being; 4.6 % stated that this principle of nutrition helped to improve their mental activity and concentration; 2.3% hadn't notice any considerable effects.

Conclusion: based on the results of the survey, it can be concluded that the majority of students are informed about intermittent fasting, but don't consider it to be a reliable way to improve health. However, numerous studies show that periodic fasting with careful observance can be of great benefit to health. The process of fasting is a certain kind of stress to the body, but moderate and short-term stress is useful. This is the so-called eustress, as a result of which protective reactions are stimulated that keep the body in good shape. This effect of stress factors is called hormesis. It produces a favorable effect on the functioning of many organs, improves metabolism and promotes concentration and memory.

But one must not forget that intermittent fasting is contraindicated to pregnant women, children (a growing body should not starve at all), people with confirmed diabetes mellitus, gastritis, since these categories of people need a constant intake of food in small portions.