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## Affordability crucial, says Lancet

A study by UK journal the Lancet has shown the correlation between average income and average consumption of fruit and vegetables, with most failing to achieve the minimum



**T**hree-quarters of Indians do not earn enough to afford fruit and vegetables, according to a report by UK peer-reviewed medical journal The Lancet.

The research concluded that affordability was the primary reason for which average global consumption of fruit and vegetables remained below prescribed levels, the IB Times reported.

The study found that in low-income countries like India, a mere 27 per cent could expect to eat above the recommended minimum, which is defined as two servings of fruit and three servings of vegetables per person per day.

Analysis of the data revealed a direct correlation between average income and average consumption of fruit and vegetables, with most failing to meet the minimum standard.

The study was undertaken over 10 years from January 2003, based on the responses of 157,000 adults aged 35-70 in 18 countries and five continents.

The main difference apparently lies in the cost of one serving of fruit or vegetables as a share of income per household. In a low-income country, for consumers to achieve the minimum requirement, more than

half of the household's income would have to be spent on fruit and vegetable consumption.

The study also referred to an earlier report which warned that a lack of sufficient fruit and vegetables in the diet was responsible for 1.7m deaths globally, while recommending an increase in availability and affordability to improve diets in low-income and low-to-middle-income countries.