Bangkok, Thailand: Faculty of Public Health Mahidol University and Queen Sirikit National Institute of Child Health

Infant and growing up formulae: exposure and perceptions pilot survey

The most recent UNICEF State of the World’s Children Report suggests that breastfeeding rates in Thailand remain low, and widespread exposure to the promotion of infant and growing up formulae may be a contributory factor.

Dr Carol Hutchinson and her colleagues from Mahidol University and Queen Sirikit National Institute of Child Health, are studying mothers’ exposure to the marketing of infant and growing up formulae and their perceptions of these products. This is a pilot survey that will help to determine whether a more extensive study is justified to establish if the marketing of infant and growing up formulae ought to be more closely controlled.

Data collection has recently been completed. In total, 143 mothers of children aged 0-2 years completed the survey at the well baby clinic, Queen Sirikit National Institute of Child Health, Bangkok. This hospital is a well-known public hospital, where doctors and nurses promote breastfeeding. Each participant completed a 15-minute interviewer-administered questionnaire. In the first section, participants were asked to give socio-demographic details. Participants were also asked whether they were breastfeeding and, if they answered no, their reasons for not breastfeeding. The second section of the survey consisted of questions about where and how often participants were exposed to the marketing of infant and growing up formulae and their perceptions of these products, including which age group they perceived a product to be suitable for, and what effects they perceived formula products to have on child health and development.

A summary of the preliminary findings will be published in next month’s newsletter.

Professionals who provide nutrition education and consulting to the public are encouraged to take into account the health, environmental and social contexts that influence health-related attitudes and behaviours in the population. This paper examined the awareness of shifts in population health outcomes associated with the nutrition transition in Vietnam among university nutrition lecturers, health professionals and school education professionals. Most of these professionals held accurate views of the current population health issues in Vietnam. However, they differed in their awareness of the seriousness of overweight and obesity. Although the majority indicated that the prevalence of obesity and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) had increased, nearly half believed that the government should complete its attempts to control undernutrition before trying to control obesity. More health professionals believed that food marketing was responsible for the growing prevalence of children's obesity, and more of them disapproved of the marketing of less healthy food to children. In contrast, the university nutrition lecturers were least aware of food marketing and the seriousness of obesity. Of the three groups, the university nutrition lecturers held less accurate perceptions of nutrition transition problems and their likely drivers. There is an urgent need for greater provision of public nutrition education for all three groups of professionals.


Supermarket Healthy Eating for Life (SHELf) was a randomized controlled trial that operationalized a socioecological approach to population-level dietary behaviour change in a real-world supermarket setting. SHELf tested the impact of individual (skill-building), environmental (20% price reductions), and combined (skill-building+20% price reductions) interventions on women’s purchasing and consumption of fruits, vegetables, low-calorie carbonated beverages and water. This process evaluation investigated the reach, effectiveness, implementation, and maintenance of the SHELf interventions.

Recent scientific publications

**Breastfeeding**


An estimated number of about 50% of all anemia may be attributed to iron deficiency among young children in Cambodia. This cross-sectional survey was conducted in rural Cambodia in September 2012. Villages in pre-selected communes were randomly chosen using stunting as a primary indicator of nutritional status. In total, 928 randomly selected households with children aged 3–23 months were included. Hemoglobin, ferritin, soluble transferrin receptor (sTfR), and retinol binding protein (RBP) were assessed from capillary blood samples. In addition, length/height and weight of mothers and children were taken and data on dietary diversity was collected. A child feeding index (CFI) was created. Associations between biomarkers of iron and vitamin A status and nutritional status or food intake were explored.

This issue includes abstracts of 32 oral and 119 poster presentations from the conference with the theme "International and Mechanistic Perspectives on Human Milk and Lactation". The topics discussed include: infant and child nutritional status; association of breast milk and infantile diarrhoea, infections, necrotizing enterocolitis and other diseases; breast feeding interventions; mobile applications and social media; obesity; human milk composition and nutrients; bone health; mammary glands and lactation; undernutrition and over-nutrition.

**Infant and toddler**


Undernutrition is a major problem in Nepal and meeting the minimum dietary standard is essential for growth and development of young children. Continuous monitoring of such practices is important to inform policy and program formulation. Results of this study showed that 57 % of mothers initiated complementary feeding at the age of 6 months. While the proportion of young children receiving minimum meal frequency was reasonably high (84 %), meal diversity (35 %) and minimum acceptable diet (33 %) remained low. Maternal education and having had their children's growth monitored were independently associated with receiving minimum acceptable diet.


Food consumption patterns of young children in China are not well known. Results of this study showed less than half of infants consumed breast milk (47%), whereas 59% of infants consumed infant formula and 53-75% of young children consumed growing-up (fortified) milk. Rice was the number one grain food consumed after 6 months (up to 88%) and the consumption of infant cereal was low. About 50% of infants did not consume any fruits or vegetables, and 38% of young children did not consume any fruits on the day of the recall. Only 40% of all children consumed dark green leafy vegetables and even fewer consumed deep yellow vegetables. Eggs and pork were the most commonly consumed protein foods.


Toddlers often go through a picky eating phase, which can make it difficult to introduce new foods into the diet. A better understanding of how parents' prompts to eat fruits and vegetables are related to children's intake of these foods will help promote healthy eating habits. 60 families recorded all toddler meals over one day, plus a meal in which parents introduced a novel fruit/vegetable to the child. Videos were coded for parent and child behaviours.
**Child, teenage and family nutrition**


The study aimed to explore how adolescents communicate food images in a widely used social media image-sharing application. It examined how and in what context food was presented and the type of food items that were frequently portrayed by following a youth related hashtag on Instagram.

**Food purchase behaviour, food marketing and food policy**


Food packages were objectively assessed to explore differences in nutrition labelling, selected promotional marketing techniques and health and nutrition claims between countries, in comparison to national regulations. Seven hundred and thirty-seven food packages were systematically evaluated for nutrition labelling, selected promotional marketing techniques relevant to nutrition and health, and health and nutrition claims. We compared pack labelling in countries with labelling regulations, with voluntary regulations and no regulations.


Television food advertisements targeted at children were content analysed. Data were collected on four major children's cable television channels in the United States aired during the hours of 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. over the period of 23 August to 5 September 2012. Based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion, the study identified a variety of persuasive appeals with central and peripheral cues in the child-targeted food commercials. Further, it investigated how the central and peripheral cues in the appeals were differently associated with low-nutrition and general-nutrition food commercials. Overall, the findings showed that general-nutrition food commercials used persuasive appeals with central cues more frequently than low-nutrition food commercials.


This paper discusses consumer preferences that need to be considered in order to ensure the success of marketing Australian food products in Asia. It describes differences in Asian and Western consumers' perceptions, as well as food acceptance and preference; it also presents methods for investigating the preference of Asian consumers. In addition, a case study is featured which examined the relationship between the sensory properties of a horticultural product and its consumer acceptance in Asian and European markets, and whether there were any perceivable taste segmentations within each market.
Food literacy, education and communication


Food literacy and nutrition education from kindergarten to 12th grade is a recommended strategy to address obesity prevention. However, limited research has explored children's understanding and conceptualization of food and healthy eating to inform the development of curricula and messaging strategies.


The National School Lunch Program in the United States provides an important opportunity to improve nutrition for the 30 million children who participate every school day. The purpose of this narrative review is to present and evaluate simple, evidence-based strategies to improve healthy eating behaviors at school.

Other


While experts agree that poverty, population, energy prices, climate change, and socio-political dynamics undermine global food security, there is no agreement on effective strategies to meet this challenge.


Water is essential for human life. It prevents dehydration and is an important source of a nutritious diet. Research scientists have been studying how drinking water compared with sugar-sweetened beverages, such as soda or juice, affects children’s health.

For further recent academic papers please visit the APFNC website and view the External publications page

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