Abstract

Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviours Related to Dietary Salt Intake among New Zealand Adults †

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Background: Sodium reduction programmes are ideally multifaceted, combining food industry interventions with consumer education and awareness-raising campaigns. Understanding consumer knowledge, attitudes and behaviours (KAB) related to dietary salt intake can inform such campaigns. The aim of this study was to assess KAB related to dietary salt intake among NZ adults.

Methods: A cross-sectional online survey of adults (18–65 years) was completed between June and August 2018. Recruitment methods and survey questions were informed by a similar Australian study. Participants were recruited in shopping malls in Auckland, and online via Facebook.

Results: Preliminary findings (n = 843, 81% female, age (mean (SD)) 36 (15) years) indicate respondents are knowledgeable about dietary salt; 62% knew the relationship between salt and sodium, 87% knew the primary dietary source is processed foods, 94% knew consuming too much salt could damage your health, and 91% believed NZ adults consume too much salt. Attitudes towards salt reduction were less favourable; 32% believed their health would improve if they reduced the amount of salt in their diet, and 57% believed there should be laws limiting salt added to processed foods. However, the majority of respondents believed both individuals (90%) and food industry (83%) were responsible for reducing salt intake. Self-reported behaviours indicated salt added at the table (18%) was less frequent than salt added during cooking (53%). Behaviours to reduce salt intake included using herbs/spices instead of salt during cooking (56%), and avoiding eating packaged foods (61%) or from fast-food restaurants (63%).

Conclusion: Preliminary findings suggest NZ adults in this survey are knowledgeable, but attitudes are less favourable and behaviours related to dietary salt intake could be improved. However, preliminary findings do not include all recruitment strategies and KAB by population subgroup are yet to be explored. These findings may provide baseline measures for monitoring changes in KAB overtime.

Supplementary Material: The presentation is available online at www.mdpi.com/2504-3900/8/1/2/s1.

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