Abstract

What Motivates and Deters Nut Consumption among the General Public in New Zealand [†]

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Background: Despite the well-documented health benefits of nuts, consumption at the population level remains low. Understanding motivators of and deterrents to consuming nuts among the general public may inform the development of initiatives to improve levels of consumption. The aim of this cross-sectional study was to examine the motivators of and deterrents to regular nut consumption among the general public in New Zealand (NZ).

Methods: A total of 1600 participants were randomly selected from the NZ Electoral roll with 710 respondents completing the questionnaire on motivators and deterrents to regular nut consumption. A modified version of Dillman's four-stage tailored design method was used for recruitment.

Results: We noted frequent agreement that participants would consume more nuts if nuts: improved health (67%), were more affordable (60%), or improved the nutrient content (59%) and balance of fats (58%) within their diets. Over half of the respondents reported they would eat more nuts if they were advised to do so by a dietitian or doctor, despite less than 4% reporting they had received such advice. The most frequently selected deterrents to increasing nut consumption were: cost (67%), potential weight gain (66%), and leading to eating too much fat (63%).

Conclusions: It is concerning that so few among the general public report they have received advice to consume more nuts from health professionals, especially given their apparent responsiveness to such advice. Health professionals could exploit these motivators of nut consumption, while also addressing the deterrents, in order to promote nut intake. These factors should also be addressed in public health messages to encourage regular nut consumption among the public.

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