

Abstract

Barriers and Facilitators to Implementation of Healthy Food and Drink Policies in Public Sector Workplaces: A Systematic Literature Review [†]

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[†] Presented at the Nutrition Society of New Zealand Annual Conference, Online, 2–3 December 2021.



Citation: Rosin, M.; Mackay, S.; Gerritsen, S.; Morenga, L.T.; Terry, G.; Mhurchu, C.N. Barriers and Facilitators to Implementation of Healthy Food and Drink Policies in Public Sector Workplaces: A Systematic Literature Review. *Med. Sci. Forum* **2022**, *9*, 28. <https://doi.org/10.3390/msf2022009028>

Academic Editors: Rachel Brown, Helen Eyles and Shabnam Jalili-Moghaddam

Published: 6 May 2022

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Abstract: Many countries and institutions have adopted policies to promote healthier food and drink availability in various settings, including public sector workplaces. However, studies reporting barriers and facilitators experienced by food vendors and caterers in providing healthy and nutritious foods and drinks have not been collated and synthesised, representing a significant gap in workplace health promotion knowledge. Our objective was to systematically synthesise evidence on barriers and facilitators relative to the implementation of and compliance with healthy food and drink policies aimed at the general adult population in public sector workplaces internationally. Nine scientific databases, nine grey literature sources, and government websites in key English-speaking countries were searched between April and June 2021. All identified records ($n = 8559$) were assessed for eligibility. Studies reporting barriers and facilitators were included irrespective of the study design and methods used, but they were excluded if they were published before the year 2000 or in a non-English language. Methodological strengths and limitations of the included studies were assessed with the CASP Qualitative Studies Checklist. Drawing on a thematic synthesis approach, primary findings were generated through research question-led coding and theme development. Forty-one studies were eligible for inclusion, and they were mainly from Australia, the United States, and Canada. The most common workplace settings were healthcare facilities, sports and recreation centres, and government agencies. Generally, poorly reported data collection and analysis methods were observed. Preliminary findings suggest that although vendors encounter challenges, there are also factors that support healthy food and drink policy implementation in public sector workplaces. Generated codes indicate that barriers and facilitators fall into five broad categories of financial ramifications, availability of healthier products, existence of supporting tools and resources, institutional leadership support, and communication between stakeholders. Understanding barriers and facilitators to successful policy implementation will significantly benefit stakeholders interested in or engaging in healthy food and drink policy development and implementation.

Keywords: workplace; food environment; healthy food policy; implementation; barrier; facilitator

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, All authors.; methodology, All authors; formal analysis, All authors; investigation, M.R.; data curation, M.R.; writing-original draft preparation, M.R.; writing-review and editing, All authors; funding acquisition, C.N.M., S.M., S.G., M.R., L.T.M. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This study was funded by the National Science Challenge Healthier Lives He Oranga Hauora as part of the HYPE (HealthY Policy Evaluation) study evaluating the implementation and impact of the National Healthy Food and Drink Policy (PI: C.N.M.). The funder had no role in study design, data collection and analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: M.R. and C.N.M. are members of the National District Health Board Food and Drink Environments Network. The Network had no role in the study design, data collection and analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript. All other authors declare they have no conflict of interests.