Aims and Objectives & Introduction

Aims & Objectives:
• Summarise the issues and effects of too much salt in the diet.
• Establish a perception of salt in the diet.
• Formulate feasible recommendations for improvement based on the collated primary and secondary data.

Introduction:
• Salt: chemically composed of elements sodium and chloride. Chemical term is NaCl.
• Functions of salt in the body: maintain body fluid and mineral balance and functions the nervous system.
• Function of salt in foods: used in processing for preservation and sensory (taste).
• Average daily salt intake in an Irish adult is 10g (1).
• FSIA introduced a 10 year salt reduction programme to try reduce intake to 6g.
• Main food contributors to a persons salt intake is processed foods such as meat, bread, cereals, soups/sauces and milk products (2).
• Excessive salt intake has been linked to hypertension which leads to increased risk of stroke and premature death from CVD.
• Different technologies and strategies to reduce salt in foods include salt substitutes, flavour enhancers, optimising physical form of salt and altering the processing technique.
• Industries have been working with the FSIA to try and reduce the salt contents in their foods.

Methods

Distribute surveys to get an analysis of the small community’s knowledge of salt in the diet.

Conduct a focus group to gather opinions on salt in the diets and ways to reduce salt in foods and diet.

Results

What would you consider, in your opinion, a maximum recommended amount of salt per day?

Table 1. Respondents rankings of the nutritional content on a label

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugars</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fats</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Food diary of 21 year old male student, living away from home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Dinner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bowl of coco pops with full fat milk &amp; two slices of white bread toasted with full fat butter</td>
<td>White bread sandwich with two slices of ham and two slices of cheese with mayonnaise. Packet of cheese and onion crisps</td>
<td>Two sausages, two rashers, two slices of pudding, scrambled egg and a portion of chips</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

• Lack of knowledge on the maximum RDA of salt. Only 29% of participants knew the RDA of salt was 6g. The second most popular answer (13%) in the research survey for the RDA of salt was 12g. This is double the recommended quantity. The third most popular answer (11%) was 3g, which is only half the recommended amount.
• When participants were asked to prioritize the nutritional content according to them, sugar was top priority (35%) and calories closely followed at 34%. Unfortunately, only 6% of participants ranked salt as their priority of information on a nutritional label.
• The result of participants understanding of the relationship between salt and sodium identified that 43% thought salt and sodium were the exact same.
• Calculating the average intake of the food diary for the 21 year old male student, it was estimated that his salt intake for that particular day was 8.8g. This is not taking into consideration any extra salt that may have been added to his meals. From this result, it shows that this male may be unaware of the harm these foods can cause to his health and if his diet is to continue in this manner, he will suffer in the long term.

Conclusion

• Education is a key factor to overcoming the lack of knowledge and consumption of salt in the diet. Further research could be carried out on national level to reflect and get an understanding of the behaviour and underlying reasons behind high salt intake.

References