

What do Europeans think and know about dietary fibre?

A 7-country representative survey

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Intakes of dietary fibre remain markedly below recommendations in most European populations. Policies have so far failed to increase fibre consumption, possibly because they overlook the consumers' vision. We have undertaken a survey of perceptions, attitudes and knowledge of Europeans about dietary fibre.

Method: Based on the answers to an in-depth qualitative survey of 100 adults, a questionnaire on dietary fibre was completed online by 7 427 subjects from France (1095), Italy (1106), Germany (1076), the Netherlands (1028), the United Kingdom (1047), Spain (1069) and Sweden (1006). The statistical adjustment was made on the global sample to make it representative of the following variables: sex, age, diploma's level (in two categories), income (in three categories), and the country's respective weight in terms of inhabitants compared to the global sample. The significance of differences was assessed using chi2 tests.

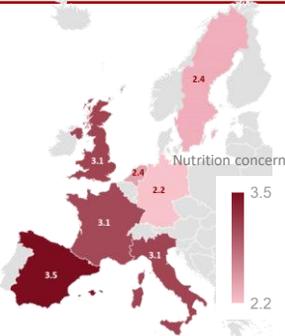
12 questions have been asked online from the 15th to the 25th of November 2021 about the following themes:

- Nutrition awareness
- Perception of dietary fibre in these 7 countries
- Knowledge about fibre and microbiota
- Eating habits (in relation to fibre-rich foods)
- Incentives to consume more fibre-rich products

Nutrition Concern:

Nutrition concern was assessed on a 6-point scale from 0 not concerned to 5 very concerned.

European people feel differently concerned about nutrition depending on countries. 32% say that buying healthy food is the most important criterion before buying tasty food (18%), satisfying basic needs (14%) and cost (10%)



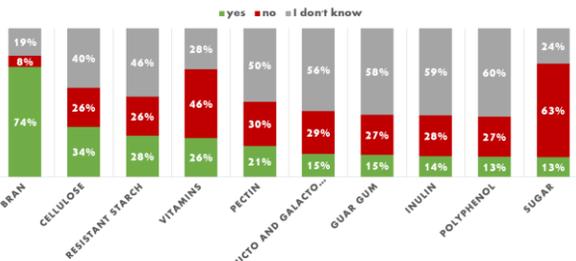
The top 3 products perceived as containing most dietary fibres are Cereals, vegetables-fruits and legumes



Overall, good knowledge about the dietary source of fibres, in spite of low recognition of cereal-based products as fibres providers.

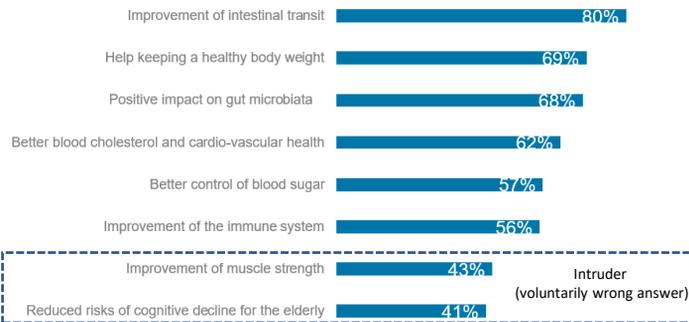
Types of fibres:

ACCORDING TO YOU WHICH ITEMS FROM THE LIST BELOW ARE DIETARY FIBRES?



Poor knowledge when it comes to identifying types of dietary fibre except for bran.

Health benefits of fibres:



People associate dietary fibre with a large set of health benefits, the most quoted ones being the better-supported ones.

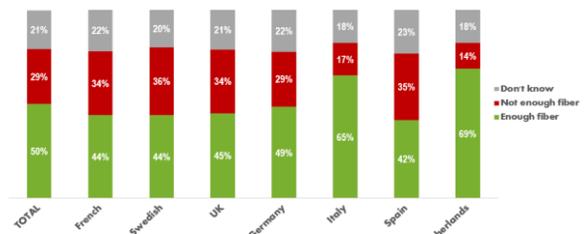
Incentives:

1st reason that would make you eat more fibres



Only 13% of consumers appear "resistant" to increasing their fibre intake. The 87% remaining ones could be targeted by appropriate means.

Eating habits: According to you, do you eat enough fibre?



Perception is far from reality. In France for example (2017 data from INCA), the median fibre intake is 18.9g/day in adults, meaning that much more than 50% of them are not meeting the 30g/day recommendation.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Data reported here are declarative and self-reported. They do not reflect the reality of behaviors but are very instructive about the perceptions and attitudes of consumers, which are key points when one wants to modify behaviors. Overall, consumers have a satisfactory knowledge of the "basics" of fibres. They are particularly aware of the favorable health effect of dietary fibre. However, consumers believe they are consuming enough fibre which is not the reality and maybe a bottleneck when trying to increase fibre intake, which is needed in all countries and at all ages. This could be achieved, inter alia, by enlarging the offer of high-fibre foods. Selecting wheat varieties (LifyWheat) with a higher content of resistant starch, that can be used in a large variety of products, is a promising route.