Impact of Front-of-Pack Nutrition Labels on Portion Size Selection: An Experimental Study in a French Cohort

The implementation of front-of-pack labelling has been gaining popularity globally. Across the European Union, three types of front-of-pack labels co-exist: Nutri-Score, the Multiple Traffic Lights (government-endorsed) and the Evolved Nutrition Label (industry-endorsed). The aim of this study was “to investigate the impact of these front-of-pack nutrition labels on portion size selection, specifically for less healthy products.”

Participants “were recruited from the French NutriNet-Santé cohort, an ongoing web-based cohort of adult volunteers, launched in France in 2009.” A total of 25,772 participants responded to the online survey and were included in this analysis. Overall, the results showed that “the Nutri-Score was the front-of-pack nutrition labelling which was associated with the lowest portion size selected by consumers, followed by the Multiple Traffic Light.” On the other hand, the Evolved Nutrition Label failed to show consistent results. In fact, results even suggest that the industry-led label resulted to an increase in portions. The results are of this study are encouraging and suggest that “front-of-pack nutrition labels appear to influence portion sizes selection for less healthy foods, though the magnitude and direction of effects may vary depending on the type of label.” These findings could be very valuable when deciding which front-of-pack label is the most efficient.