

Portuguese consumers' attitudes towards food labelling

Globally, there is a growing momentum to re-examine the impact of food labels. In fact, the WHO Regional Office for Europe “has called on countries to extend the use of consumer-friendly front-of-package labelling that is easy to understand and interpret on the basis of strong, consistent evidence that such schemes are preferred and correctly understood.” A number of reasons exist for consumers to read nutritional labels, but it is key to ensure that they provide understandable information to ensure they have a positive effect on food choice. The aim of this report was “to show how Portuguese consumers use and understand nutrition information on food labels in their daily lives.”

The report highlights the “importance of using mixed methods in investigations to ensure deeper understanding of consumers’ attitudes.” Overall, the report aimed “to contribute to understanding of Portuguese consumer behaviour with regard to nutrition labels” and formulated the following two recommendations:

- To make necessary *changes to food labelling*, as the majority of participants reported being confused in interpreting food labels; and
- To *conduct social marketing campaigns* to enable consumers, producers and retailers to become food literate.

Finally, as a recommendation to the Portuguese Ministry of Health, the report proposes the “development of a strategic social marketing plan to improve the nutritional literacy of the Portuguese population, to cover the period 2018–2022.”

Reference: S. Gomes, M. Nogueira, M. and Ferreira, and M. J. Gregorio. *Portuguese Consumers’ Attitudes Towards Food Labelling*. World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe. 2017.