



Article Title

Sales of healthy choices at fast food restaurants in Australia

Citation

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Abstract

Some fast food chains have introduced healthier options, however sales data for these menu items are not publicly available. This study aimed to observe healthy and unhealthy meal purchases in Australian fast food stores.

Methods

An observational study was conducted comparing the purchases of healthy and unhealthy meals at 20 McDonald's stores in a variety of socio-economic areas in New South Wales, Australia. Data collection occurred at lunch and dinner times over a two-week period that included both the school holidays and term time. Purchases of Heart Foundation Tick Approved (healthy), standard menu items (unhealthy) and take-away meals (healthfulness unobservable due to take-away bags) were recorded. Chi-square and Fisher's Exact Tests were used to assess differences in purchases.

Results

There were 1,449 meal purchases observed, of which 1% were healthy, 65% were unhealthy and 34% were take-away. There were no statistically significant differences in the purchases of healthy meals by socioeconomic status area, weekdays compared to weekends, school term compared to school holidays, or at lunch compared to dinner time.

Conclusion

Although the provision of healthy fast food options is commendable, this research shows that only a minority of Australians are purchasing them.