

ARTICLE REVIEWED

Does Food and Health Education in School Influence Students' Everyday Life?

Beinert, C., Sørli, A. C., Åbacka, G., Palojoki, P., & Vik, F. N. (2022). Does food and health education in school influence students' everyday life?. *Health Education Journal*, 81(1), 29-39.

THE PROBLEM:

It is known that a healthy diet is a critical element to life longevity (Afshin et al., 2019). To educate the population on how to create and implement a healthy diet, Norway has developed The National Action Plan for a Healthier Diet which contains quantitative targets and indicators for change, with some of these being written specifically for children (Ministry of Health and Care Services, 2017). With 96% of students attending public schools (Statistics Norway, 2020), education became a targeted space for educating children about food and healthy choices. Food health curriculum is taught to students ages 6-15. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand students' experiences with food health and how it impacts their day-to-day lives.



Research Summary:

The participants of the study were 31 students in grades 6-10. The students were placed in focus groups of three to seven students based on their grade and school location (total of three schools). Each focus group was interviewed and asked to answer questions relating to food health education.

Conclusion:

The authors found that students perceived food health courses to be fun and relevant to their lives. Specifically, students believed food health courses impacted their choices of food, cooking at home, and food hygiene. However, the degree to which students' daily lives were impacted by food health curriculum varied across groups.

Key Takeaway:

In this paper, the authors found that food health courses do impact students' knowledge of healthy choices related to diet, but this did not always lead to students choosing better food to eat. It should be noted that this study viewed a small sample, and more research is needed to understand how food health impacts students' daily choices. Specifically, the authors encourage future research to explore teacher pedagogy strategies that have stronger impacts on students in food health.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Afshin A, John Sur P, Fay KA, et al. (2019) Health effects of dietary risks in 195 countries, 1990-2017: A systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017. *The Lancet* 393: 1958-1972.

Ministry of Health and Care Services (2017) Norwegian National Action Plan for a healthier diet: An outline – Healthy diet, meal enjoyment and good health for everyone! Available at:

https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/fab53cd681b247bfa8c03a3767c75e66/norwegian_national_action_plan_for_a_healthier_diet_an_outline.pdf

Statistics Norway (2020) Pupils in primary and lower secondary school: Annually – SSB. Available at:

<https://www.ssb.no/en/utdanning/statistikker/utgrs>