SUSTAINABLE FOOD CONSUMPTION PATTERNS AMONG ADULTS IN HUNGARY

Cieleszky N[1], Keczeli V[2], Gubicskóné Kisbenedek A[1], Tisza BB[2], Boncz I[3], Verzár Zs[1]

1. Institute of Human Nutrition and Dietetics, University of Pécs, Pécs, Hungary
2. Doctoral School of Health Sciences, University of Pécs, Pécs, Hungary
3. Institute for Health Insurance, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Pécs, Pécs, Hungary

OBJECTIVES

Humanity must reduce greenhouse gas emission (GHGE) in order to decrease impacts of climate change. Knowing that one third of anthropogenic GHGE is generated by our food system we should deliver individual efforts to transform towards a more sustainable diet. The aim of this study was (1) to explore the general knowledge about environmental protection (2) to investigate current food consumption behaviour (3) to assess attitude towards individual diet change among Hungarian adults.

METHODS

308 adults participated in the online, anonymous, non-representative questionnaire between 22/07/2023 and 25/08/2023 which consisted of 3 parts: sociodemographic data, questions about sustainability as well as their existing and optional eating habits. JAMOVI 2.3.28 statistical software was used to process data ($p \leq 0.05$).

RESULTS

In their self-evaluation 80.5% (n=248) of respondents were partially driven and 14.0% (n=43) were fully driven by sustainability (Figure 1). 79.9% (n=246) had knowledge about phrase 'sustainable food consumption' (Figure 2). Reducing food waste (81.5% n=251) is the most prevalent existing method of sustainable food-related behaviour while avoiding meat and dairy products (37.1% n=114) is the least frequent one (Figure 3). The following groups showed less signs to accept changes in their diet: men compared to women (p=0.002) (Figure 4); age group 60+ compared to younger ones; people with lower living standards compared to ones with higher income (p=0.004). 23.7% (n=73) tends to spend more on sustainable food but this intention is lowering in parallel with varying levels of living standards (p<0.001) (Table 1). Sustainability of existing diet and knowledge of environmental aspects are increasing the level of acceptance in transforming eating habits (Pearson r= 0.569, r=0.336, respectively, p<0.001).

CONCLUSIONS

As we experienced an incomplete knowledge among adult population, we recommend efficient educative and motivational measures to steer a change towards higher flexibility and more sustainable food choices. Additionally, to make sustainable diet affordable for households with lower income, governmental regulations should be initiated.

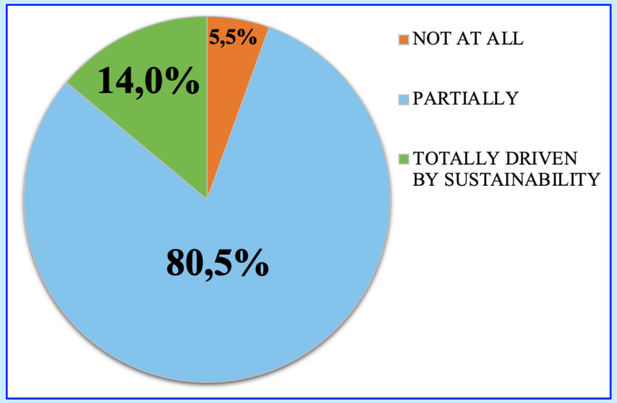

Figure 1
Distribution of respondents according to their self-commitment on sustainability.

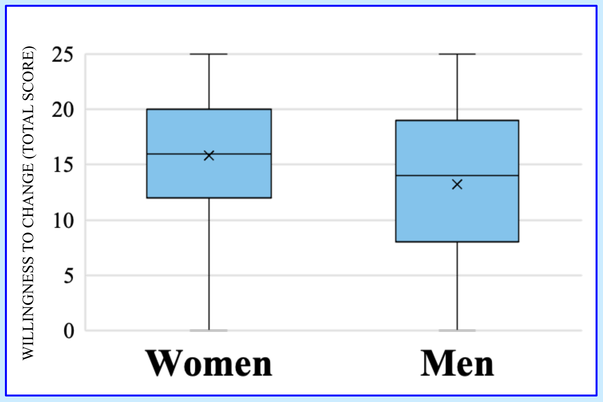

Figure 4
Willingness to change to a more sustainable diet according to gender. Women: mean=15.8 median=16.0 SD=5.53; Men: N=mean=13.2 median= 14.0 SD=6.41

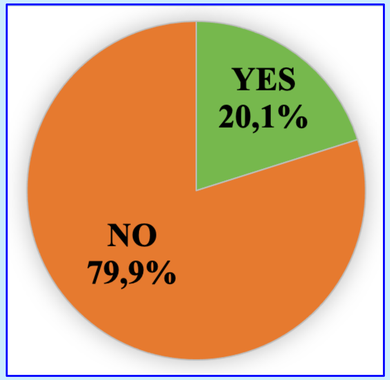

Figure 2
Distribution of respondents whether they heard about phrase 'sustainable food consumption' or not.

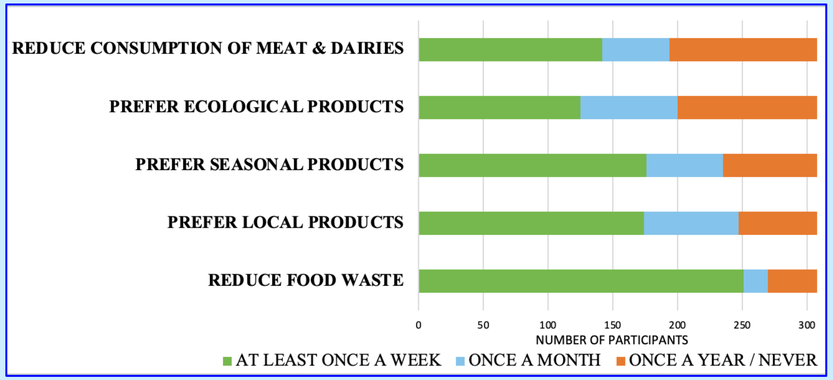

Figure 3
Frequency / acceptance of different existing sustainable food-related behaviours of respondents (N=308).

Dwass-Steel-Critchlow-Fligner pairwise comparisons	W	p
Living on a strict budget - General living standard	0.736	0.954
Living on a strict budget - Good living standard (have savings)	2.898	0.170
Living on a strict budget - Wealthy	5.435	<0.001
General living standard - Good living standard (have savings)	3.841	0.033
General living standard - Wealthy	6.484	<0.001
Good living standard (have savings) - Wealthy	4.535	0.007

Table 1
Pairwise comparisons of willingness to spend more on a more sustainable diet according to varying levels of living standards.

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UNIVERSITY OF PÉCS

Corresponding author:
Dr. Imre BONCZ, MD, MSc, PhD, Habil
University of Pécs, Faculty of Health Sciences,
Institute for Health Insurance, Hungary
E-mail: imre.boncz@etk.pte.hu

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