

Food and You secondary data analysis to consider relationships between food safety and nutrition

Area of research interest: [Food and You](#)

Study duration: 2014-01-01

Project code: FS307014

Conducted by: NatCen

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Background

It is generally assumed that food safety and nutrition are considered distinct by consumers, and so are thought about and acted upon separately. However, there is little evidence to support this assumption and the nature of relationships between nutrition and food safety practices are largely unexplored. Whether relationships exist between food safety and nutrition practices is of interest for our organisation, particularly in Scotland and Northern Ireland, where we are responsible for both food safety and nutrition policy.

Our Food and You survey has revealed interesting results relating separately to food safety and nutrition, including variation among population sub-groups. This project will involve secondary analysis of the Food and You waves 1 and 2 data to identify if there are links between food safety and nutrition practices and, if so, the nature of these relationships.

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Research Approach

Food and You is a biennial, random probability, cross-sectional survey of adults (16 years and over) living in private households in the UK and is commissioned by us. The surveys include many questions on reported food safety behaviour, knowledge and attitudes both in the home and when eating out. They also include questions covering nutrition, such as fruit and vegetable consumption, knowledge of healthy eating recommendations and attitudes to healthy eating.

This project examined whether relationships exist between food safety and nutrition practices. This was done through secondary data analysis of the waves 1 and 2 Food and You dataset (collected in 2010 and 2012 respectively).

The following areas were investigated as part of this project:

- links between reported domestic food safety practices and reported nutrition-related behaviours and shopping and cooking behaviours
- links between reported domestic food safety practices and knowledge of healthy eating recommendations

- links between reported domestic food safety practices and attitudes towards healthy eating
- links between reported food safety practices outside the home and reported nutrition-related behaviours

In addition, this project considered how knowledgeable people are about healthy eating recommendations, to what extent they follow healthy eating advice and whether people's attitudes to healthy eating relate to reported behaviours.

Within these four areas the analysis controlled for several social and economic factors.

The findings from this project were considered after a study of current literature on food safety and nutrition.

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Results

Key findings

Links between reported domestic food safety practices and reported nutrition-related behaviours

Overall, people's reported nutrition-related behaviours (such as fruit and vegetable consumption, or being vegetarian) and shopping frequency do not appear to be linked to whether or not they report practices which are in line with recommended food safety practices. Where links were observed in descriptive analysis, this was not sustained in regression analyses controlling for socio-demographic and socio-economic factors. This suggests that any relationships were explained by other factors, such as gender.

Links between reported domestic food safety practices and knowledge of healthy eating recommendations

People's knowledge of healthy eating recommendations (specifically the '5-a-day' message and the eatwell plate) was linked to whether or not they reported behaviours in line with recommended food safety practices. Descriptive analysis showed that the people who demonstrated knowledge in line with recommended practice were more likely to report behaviours in line with recommended practice and this association remained significant after controlling for socio-demographic and socio-economic factors.

Links between reported domestic food safety practices and attitudes towards healthy eating

Links were identified between some attitudes and the extent to which people reported behaviours in line with recommended food safety practices. Respondents who perceived their diet as healthy and those with less complacent views on healthy eating were more likely to report behaviours in line with recommended practice.

Links between safe and healthy food when eating outside the home

People who reported that they would like more information displayed about healthy options in catering establishments when eating out were more likely to report valuing a good food hygiene rating and using a food hygiene rating scheme. However, perceptions of whether or not food

eaten out was considered to be more or less healthy than that eaten at home did not predict whether respondents reported valuing a good food hygiene rating nor using a food hygiene rating scheme.

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Additional Info

Please note that an amended version of the research report was published in July 2015. The amended version contains a correction for an error on page 4 in the original version, where the median value was reported as 65.6 when this was actually the mean value.

Research report

England, Northern Ireland and Wales

PDF

[View Eating safe and well links between nutrition and food safety practices as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (1.13 MB)