

Topic Area: Nutrition and Health Education

Abstract Title: Full-time work and food skill behaviors of Canadian parents
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Introduction: Deskilling (reduced level of food skills) of Canadians has been attributed to the increased role of women in the workforce. Despite similar proportions of men and women in the workforce, 80 % of women are still responsible for family food preparation. Furthermore, time restrictions of working parents has led to an increased dependence on convenience meals (dinning out, ready-to-eat foods and processed meals).

Objective: To explore the relationship between full-time working parents, food skills and diet quality.

Methods: A representative sample of 2201 Canadian parents with children 2-12 years old who were responsible for $\geq 50\%$ of family meal preparation were recruited by a private firm using random-digit-dialing as part of an evaluation of a national healthy eating campaign. Parents were invited to complete a web-based survey that included a sociodemographic questionnaire, a validated food frequency questionnaire and questions from Statistics Canada's *Canadian Community Health Survey Food Skills* (CCHSFS) component. The healthy eating index (HEI) adapted to the Canadian Food Guide was calculated to measure diet quality. All items from the CCHSFS were dichotomized to allow for logistic regression modelling. Sociodemographic variables were used as covariates in regression models.

Results: Parents ($n=771$) engaging in more food skills also had better diet quality ($p<0.05$), however, there was no difference in diet quality between parents who worked full-time and those who did not. The only food skill that full-time working parents engaged in less was the use of mostly basic and whole ingredients to prepare meals ($p<0.05$).

Conclusions: Results indicate that food skills are important for family diet quality, but that working full-time has little effect on food skills practices. Timing of food skill acquisition (in childhood, adolescence or early adulthood) should be studied as well as the coping mechanisms that full-time working parents use to facilitate family meal preparation.

Significance to the field of dietetics: This study increases our understanding of family food skill practices of working parents.