

Nutritional Assessment and Therapy

Promising interventions for increasing dried bean consumption: consensus results

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Introduction: Although Canada is a leading grower of dried beans and the Canada's Food Guide (2019) emphasizes eating more plant-based protein, the consumption of dried beans is low in Canada. Multiphase optimization methods have been suggested as a way to determine the most effective components of complex interventions to change health habits, including eating habits.

Objectives: The focus of this preliminary work was to identify promising marketing and health education strategies for promoting dried beans, based on the opinions of a group of experts from agri-food industries, academia and health promotion.

Methods: A one-day consensus process using nominal group and ranking methods was conducted among 14 stakeholders and researchers experienced in nutrition and marketing strategies and product development. The stakeholders represented Ontario Bean Growers, Pulse Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, food science, food marketing, public health and human health nutrition, registered dietitians, Guelph Community Health Centre, Guelph Food Research Centre, and Guelph Family Health Study. The process was facilitated by a professional moderator. The stakeholders were asked to generate ideas to answer the question, "What are some potential interventions to increase dried bean consumption?" These ideas were then discussed and categorized into common themes. The group was then asked, "if we could only trial five of these strategies in the next year, which ones are most promising?" Individuals selected his/her top 5 and the overall results further discussed until a consensus of the top ranked interventions was reached.

Results: Among top ranked interventions were meal kits, promotional activities such as coupons, reward programs to incentivize purchases, incorporating dried beans into individual's diet by introducing convenient products and broadened cooking skills, and improving social media platforms for sharing experience and stories.

Conclusions: The consensus meeting results pointed to several promising strategies to increase dried bean consumption in the Canadian population based on the known barriers from previous consumer research.

Significance: The top selected interventions were used in the next phase of this project, which involved testing various combinations of the interventions for feasibility in a 3-week pilot study among 16 subjects. Results will inform development of a fully powered intervention study.

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