

AN INSIGHT OF ROMANIANS' KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DIETARY FIBERS IN RELATIONSHIP WITH CANCER

Monica Tarcea¹, Zita Fazakas², Florina Ruta¹, Victoria Rus³, Salcudean M¹, Nemes L¹,
Costela Serban⁴, Raquel Guiné⁵

¹Department of Community Nutrition and Food safety, University of Medicine and Pharmacy Tirgu Mures, Romania

²Department of Biochemistry, University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Tirgu Mures, Romania

³Department of Informatics and Biostatistics, University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Tirgu Mures, Romania

⁴Department of Informatics and Biostatistics, University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Timisoara, Romania

⁵CI&DETS Research Centre - Department of Food Science and Technology, Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, Portugal

Correspondence author: Associate professor Monica Tarcea - Head of Community Nutrition and Food Safety Department, Faculty of Medicine, University of Medicine and Pharmacy Tirgu-Mures, Romania; 38 Gheorghe Marinescu street, Tirgu-Mures city, postal code 540139, Mures county, Romania; fax +40 265 210407; mobile phone +40 744 791967; email: monica.tarcea@umftgm.ro

ABSTRACT

Objectives: To estimate the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics of Romanian population, and their knowledge towards dietary fibre intake, the information sources preferred and perception of cancer related health risks.

Methods: We used a convenient cross-sectional survey, and the data were collected using a validated questionnaire, disseminated online. Six different Romanian counties with 57 cities were selected in 2015, with 670 participants, and we used the SPSS program 22.0 for statistical purpose.

Results: The knowledge about dietary fibres intake was low in our sample, also was the ingestion of foods rich in fibre (fruits, vegetables and cereals). Compared to men, women agree significantly more frequent that fibres in appropriate amounts can prevent or treat diseases ($U=44607$, $z=-4.66$, $p<0.001$, $r=0.18$) and separately related to specific diseases, that fibres can prevent and/or treat cardio-vascular diseases, cholesterol, bowel cancer, breast cancer, constipation, and diabetes, but with no differences regarding the deficiency of vitamins and minerals ($p=0.774$) or obesity ($p=0.399$). The indepth analysis of factors that are able to influence Romanian's knowledge and attitudes towards food fibres, defined the social profile of the respondents with interest on dietary fibre intake, which is: young females, with at least high school education, that considers internet and television like main sources of information regarding fibres. Comparing to other EU countries, Romanian consumers have good information about dietary fibres importance for health but the daily intake is lower.

Conclusions: Based on our results, we can elaborate efficient community and school intervention programs, more focused on modern information technology and communication skills, fit to the consumer's profile in order to promote a healthy nutrition behavior and proper knowledge.

Keywords: dietary fibre; cancer; obesity; internet; education