

Do consumers utilize nutrition information on processed meat products in their purchasing decisions in supermarkets in Nakuru town, Kenya.

Background: High consumption of processed meats has been associated with non-communicable diseases such as cancer, obesity and cardiovascular diseases among others. The purpose of this study was to determine the utilization of nutrition information in purchasing decisions of processed meats in supermarkets in Nakuru, Kenya.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among 422 consumers continually sampled from eight randomly selected supermarkets in Nakuru town. Structured questionnaire, key informant interviews and observation checklist were used to collect data. Data were analyzed using SPSS. P-value of $p < 0.05$ was considered significant.

Results: Majority (66.1%) of the participants were female; young adults aged between 29-39 years (48.6%), with an average income of between Kshs 10,000- 20,000 (24.6%). Majority (92.6%) had above secondary education. Only one of the brands in the market under study provided nutrition information on the label of its products. Most (66.8%) utilized nutrition information. Cholesterol (26.1%), sodium (17.8%) and fats (15.4%) were the nutrient of most interest. 58.2% of consumers experienced challenges when reading nutrition information. Associations were established between utilization of nutrition information in purchasing decisions with age (chi-square; $p < 0.001$), sex (chi-square; $p = 0.018$), income (chi-square; $p < 0.001$), and education (chi-square; $p < 0.001$).

Conclusion: Kenya Bureau of Standards and nutritionists should ensure that the information on processed meats is simplified. It should also set policies and make nutrition labeling mandatory on all processed foods to protect consumers and improve access to health related information.

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