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## Abstract

# How Can We Encourage Primary School Children to Choose and Consume High-Fibre Breakfast Products? <sup>†</sup>

Nicholas M. Wilkinson <sup>1,\*</sup>, Katie Adolphus <sup>2</sup>, Shiniqua Coote <sup>1</sup>, Olivia Goldman <sup>2</sup>, Neil Boyle <sup>2</sup> and Louise Dye <sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup> School of Food Science and Nutrition, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, UK; ll19sc@leeds.ac.uk<sup>2</sup> School of Psychology, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, UK; k.adolphus@leeds.ac.uk (K.A.); ps20ojg@leeds.ac.uk (O.G.); n.b.boyle@leeds.ac.uk (N.B.); l.dye@leeds.ac.uk (L.D.)

\* Correspondence: n.wilkinson1@leeds.ac.uk

<sup>†</sup> Presented at the 14th European Nutrition Conference FENS 2023, Belgrade, Serbia, 14–17 November 2023.**Keywords:** dietary fibre; breakfast; school; preference; food choice; children

**Background and Objectives:** Increasing fibre consumption is a goal of UK public health nutrition, especially in low socio-economic status ('SES') groups, who consume the least fibre. Increasing accessibility and exposure to higher-fibre foods in young children could encourage consumption. Working in primary school breakfast clubs serving low SES populations, we examined children's (aged 4–11) liking and acceptance of higher-fibre breakfast foods, as part of the H3 Transforming the UK Food System project ([www.h3.ac.uk](http://www.h3.ac.uk), accessed on 14 June 2023). To increase familiarity and accessibility, we first offered a 'Taste-and-Rate' activity to give children an opportunity to try the foods before encountering them on the breakfast buffet. This research asked two key questions: 1. Do children like the high-fibre foods? 2. Do children choose and eat the higher-fibre foods for their breakfast? **Methods:** The high-fibre foods used were bread/toast, breakfast cereal products, porridge oats, and fresh fruit. To answer Q1, we used a simple tasting activity wherein children were offered small pieces of target foods and asked to indicate their like/dislike/ambivalence using emoji style icons printed on a tablemat. To answer Q2, we added our high-fibre food options alongside the usual school breakfast club buffet and recorded children's food choices. We also collected baseline measures of children's food choices against which to measure choices during the interventions. **Results:** This poster will report preliminary results from four schools. The results to date suggest that many children like, choose, and consume high-fibre foods when given a chance to taste and familiarise with them, and that their preferences are diverse and individual. **Discussion:** Children's preferences and selectivity in accepting foods, especially novel foods, are often noted as a barrier to healthier eating and fibre consumption. There is often an impression of parents and school food staff, for example, that 'the children only like white bread'. This research asks whether children will accept high-fibre breakfast foods, given a child-centred introduction where they can taste the foods in advance. The results will be of interest to educators, providers, and policy makers interested in school food provision and children's healthy eating, especially in low SES communities.



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**Informed Consent Statement:** Opt-out caregiver consent was obtained for all child participants involved in this study. Opt-out consent was used because data was collected anonymously.

**Data Availability Statement:** Data for this study is not yet published.

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