



AWARNESS OF THE SWISS QUALITY STANDARDS FOR HEALTH PROMOTING COMMUNAL CATERING

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Introduction: Swiss quality standards (QS) for health-promoting communal catering (CC) were published in December 2009, accompanied by an information campaign (e.g. Internet, mass mailings). The key element is the Swiss Society for Nutrition's Food Pyramid (FP). The QS support CC establishments in providing health-promoting ways of eating/drinking, thus helping consumers to make more healthful food/beverage choices.

Objectives: Assess the QS awareness level of consumers and the Swiss CC sector one year after publication. Develop and launch a target group-specific public relations (PR) concept/campaign for health-promoting CC.

Method: Computer-assisted telephone interviews were carried out from January to April 2011. Data were collected from two different target groups: (1) nationally representative sample of Swiss residents (n=721) stratified by sex (337 men, 384 women), age (up to 34 years n=233 / 35-54 years n=311 / 55++ years n=177), and linguistic region (German n=562 / French n=159). (2) systematic sample (n=334) from a CC address database stratified by food service provider (n=261) and producers / suppliers (n=73), catering sector (Education n=148 / Business n=20 / Care n=93) and linguistic region (German n=244 / French n=90). The following topics were covered: awareness / importance of QS implementation, preferred communication channels, and (for consumers) the importance of a balanced diet and awareness of the FP.

Results: Around 10% of consumers and 34% of the CC sector were aware of the QS; 75% of the latter were highly interested in the issue. Steps of QS implementation in CC sector are shown in Fig. 1. The CC sector was best reached through work colleague (41%), internal trade media (30%), and associations (22%), as opposed to (e.g.) Internet or mail (15%). Over half of consumers considered a balanced diet in CC very important (Fig. 2), while other related factors (e.g., pleasant ambiance) were rated less important.

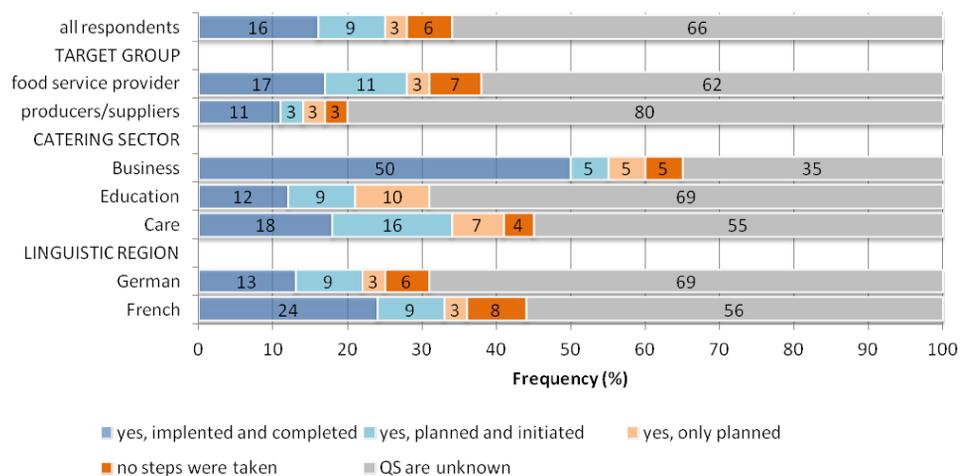


Fig. 1: CC sector – QS implementation steps that food service providers and producers/suppliers already have taken (n=334)

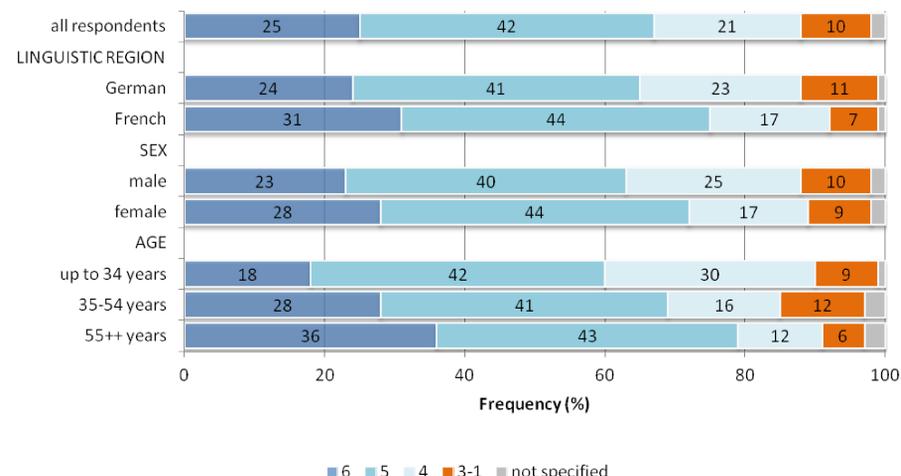


Fig. 2: Consumers rating on how important a balanced diet is when having lunch at CC (n=401). Frequency based on a 6-point-scale (1=very low, 6=very high). This question was only asked of consumers, who have lunch at CC at least once in a week.

Table 1: Consumers motivation to eat at CC, where QS are implemented (n=401). This question was only asked of consumers, who have lunch at CC at least once in a week.

MOTIVATION LEVEL	%
Very motivated	44.4
Pretty motivated	39.7
Less motivated	10.0
Not motivated	4.0
Not specified	2.0

Consumers preferred to be reached through (multiple possible answers) TV or radio spots (66%), billboards (54%) and newspaper advertisements (53%). More than 80% of consumers were motivated to eat in a CC establishment where QS are implemented (table 1).

Conclusions: A target group-specific PR concept/campaign for health-promoting CC by the Education/Business/Care subsectors is needed. Food service providers must be targeted through their customers as well as from inside the sector using sector-specific disseminators. Continuous QS implementation will continue to be monitored to ensure its successful contribution to Swiss public health.