Breakfast in human nutrition: The international breakfast research initiative

Breakfast is often referred to as the most important meal of the day and in recent years has been implicated in weight control, cardio-metabolic risk factors and cognitive performance although, at present, the literature remains inconclusive as to the precise health benefits of breakfast. There are extensive reports of breakfast’s contributions to daily food and nutrient intakes, as well as many studies that have compared daily food and nutrient intakes by breakfast consumers and skippers. However, significant variation exists in the definitions of breakfast and breakfast skippers, and in methods used to relate breakfast nutrient intakes to overall diet quality. The present review describes a novel and harmonised approach to the study of the nutritional impact of breakfast through The International Breakfast research Initiative involving national dietary survey data from Canada, Denmark, France, Spain, the UK and the USA. It is anticipated that the analysis of such data along harmonised lines, will allow the project to achieve its primary goal of exploring approaches to defining optimal breakfast food and nutrient intakes. Such data will be of value to public health nutrition policy-makers and food manufacturers and will also allow consistent messaging to help consumers to optimize food choices at breakfast.

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