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An understanding the reasons of low consumption associated with vegetables in school-aged children

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In spite of having an extensive bibliography that provides a good basis for understanding the health benefits generated by consuming vegetables in the recommended amounts, worldwide, this intake is still low. Particularly in children, since the behavior towards the foods developed during the first years of life tends to persist until adulthood. The objective of this study was to go deeper into the reasons of low consumption associated with vegetables in school-aged children to complement the information to design strategies in order to increase the consumption of vegetable in Uruguayan children. To achieve this goal the study was organized in two complementary steps: a qualitative approach (focus group discussions with children) aimed to identify the most relevant motives of rejections of vegetables; and a quantitative approach with a survey measured the reasons for low vegetable consumption in children through the response of their parents (Figure 1). In the qualitative approach with children, we explore the information about commonly consumed foods (both at home and at school), preferred foods, most consumed vegetables, reasons for consumption and non-consumption of vegetables and the perceptions of children who eat and those who do not eat vegetables. In the quantitative approach, firstly an exploratory study was conducted with parents on the consumption of vegetables in their children and them. Based on the information obtained, a new survey was designed to be answered by parents with 14 phrases to investigate the reasons for consumption of each type of vegetables. We confirmed what the children mentioned in the qualitative study about how the sensory characteristics of vegetables (mainly color and taste) as well as consumption habits in the family environment play an important role in the acceptance or rejection of the vegetables in children of school age. For a better visualization between vegetables and each phrase, a correspondence analysis was performed. The vegetables were grouped into 5 different set reasons for rejecting them. This obtained result will complement the information to design strategies in order to increase the consumption of each type of vegetable in Uruguayan children.

Biography

Laura Raggio is a Food Engineer from the Universidad de la República, Uruguay. Teacher and researcher at the university since 2008. She works in the food area: sensory evaluation and physicochemical analysis, product development, food regulations and olive oil. She currently serves as Prof. Adj of the Food Department of the School of Nutrition of the Universidad de la República. Participates in research projects, makes publications arbitrary journals. She is completing his PhD in Chemistry in the field of children & vegetables.

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