Three-Year School-Based Intervention May Change Primary School Children's Preferences for Fruit and Vegetable Dishes

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Objective

Evaluation of the three-year school-based multicomponent intervention "Nutri-školica" in terms of changing children's preferences for fruit and vegetable dishes from the school menus.

Background

Preference, as one of the biological characteristics according to Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory, may be the trigger for children’s consumption of fruit and vegetable dishes. With appropriate educational, sensory, and exposure-based intervention, it could be modified to increase children’s acceptance of fruit and vegetable dishes.¹ ²

Evaluation Method

To assess the impact of the intervention on children’s preferences for fruit and vegetable dishes, a two-way analysis of variance with repeated measures was conducted to compare pre- and post-intervention changes in the intervention and control groups. Children’s preferences were assessed during school lunch two weeks before and after the intervention. After the children finished their school lunch, they rated the meal items, which included fruit and vegetables, using a taste-rate method on a 5-point smiley-face scale (5 represents "most liked"). The analysis was conducted with 70 children who ate school lunch and rated the meals before and after the intervention.

Results

Children in the intervention group (before: 4.19 ± 1.12; after: 4.29 ± 0.83) showed a significant increase (p=0.018) in preference for fruit and vegetable dishes served at school after the three-year intervention compared to the control group (before: 4.29 ± 0.92; after: 3.28 ± 1.07).

Conclusion

The intervention "Nutri-školica" has shown successful in changing children’s preferences for fruit and vegetable dishes.

References


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