

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE INTAKE AND DETERMINANTS AMONGST PORTUGUESE MOTHERS OF 11-13 YEAR OLD CHILDREN. THE PRO CHILDREN PROJECT

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F&V play an important role in the protection of various non-communicable diseases but available data suggest that intake is far below the recommended amounts. This study focuses on the data collected amongst Portuguese mothers within the Pro children project (www.prochildren.org). In this cross-sectional study, children born in 1990-92 and their mothers filled in a structured questionnaire on their F&V intake and socio-demographic characteristics. Data from 1853 mothers are included in this analysis to assess the intake of F&V and to examine its relationship with socio-demographic characteristics.

F&V intake was assessed by validated 24 hour recall and food frequency questions. The 24-hour recall part was used for measuring group mean intake, whereas the food frequency part was used to rank subjects according to their usual intake. Socio-demographic variables analysed were marital status, number of people in household, education level, social class and region of residence.

Logistic regression models were run to assess associations between daily fruit and vegetable intake and socio-demographic characteristics.

73% and 70% of the mothers indicated to eat, respectively, F&V daily. Mean intake of F&V was, respectively, 221 and 170g/day. The main intake of vegetables came from vegetable soup (76g/day). Only 46% of the mothers meet the WHO recommendations of ≥ 400 g/day.

The daily fruit intake was significantly higher amongst mothers who live with spouse/partner (OR=1,685; $p=0,005$); living in Centro region of the country compared to Norte (OR=1,380; $p=0,042$) and belonging to higher (OR=2,060; $p=0,007$) and lower (OR=1,550; $p=0,010$) social class compared to economically inactive mothers. For vegetable, the daily intake was significantly higher amongst mothers in the higher social class (OR=2,177; $p=0,005$) and with higher educational level (OR=1,557; $p=0,007$ for mothers with 10-11 years of education and OR=1,766; $p=0,007$ for ≥ 12 years compared to < 7 years).

F&V intake amongst Portuguese mothers is low compared to the international recommendations. Future efforts to promote fruit and especially vegetable consumption among Portuguese mothers are necessary.