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# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

6TH MEETING  
OF YOUNG RESEARCHERS OF UNIVERSITY OF PORTO



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## CREDITS

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© Universidade do Porto  
AA ID+i  
t.22 040 81 46  
secidi@reit.up.pt

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# A review of the availability and consumption of fish and seafood in Portugal

**A. Teixeira<sup>1</sup>, A. Cavadas<sup>2</sup>, S. Rodrigues<sup>1</sup>, B. Neto<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Nutrition and Food Sciences, University of Porto, Portugal;

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Engineering, University of Porto, Portugal;

Fish consumption has been associated to a range of health benefits. Fish is low in fat, high in protein and an excellent source of omega 3 fatty acids. With a huge seaside border, Portugal has a privileged position for fish and seafood access. In Portugal, eating fish has not only an important dietary value but also an important role in cultural heritage. The aim of this work was to review the available data on fish and seafood supply/consumption in Portugal, evaluating both time trends and self-sufficiency.

The searched data sources included national or regional representative studies: FAO food balance sheets (FBS) (1961 to 2009), households budget surveys (HBS) (1990 to 2005) and individual consumption obtained through the EpiPorto study circa 2000, the National Health Survey (INS) (1995 to 2006) and the SPCNA/Nestlé survey in 2009. The first two sources used provide data about the availability of fish and seafood: the FBS at national level, focusing on the major food groups and the HBS at household level, listing the fish and seafood species; the individual data translates the real consumption of fish and seafood either in frequency or quantity.

In 1961 the fish and seafood self-sufficiency ratio (production/(production+imports-exports)) for Portugal was 1.01, which indicated the independence of the country for this group of products. Along time this ratio has decreased and in 2009 its value was 0.37, which is explained for the decrease in production and the large increase in the imports. However, Portugal still has a high supply of fish and seafood. In 2009 FBS, a value of 167g/capita/day was registered for Portugal, ranking the country in the 4<sup>th</sup> position among the world countries with largest supply and the 1<sup>st</sup> position among the Mediterranean countries. By contrast, the EU-27 registered only 63g/capita/day in 2009. From the 2005 HBS it was observed that around 70% of the household acquisitions of fish and seafood rely on cod fish (18.6%), hake (13.7%), jack-fish/mackerel (13.8%), sardines (9.8%), tuna (4.3%), squid/cuttlefish (4.2%), octopus (3.9%) and swordfish (2.4%). Data from the INS revealed that the proportion of people consuming fish has decreased from 55% in 1995 to 49% in 2006. The 2009 SPCNA/Nestlé survey found out similar results, a value of 49% for fish and of 5.5% for seafood. Additionally, data from the EpiPorto study reveals a daily consumption of fish and seafood of 75.6(±34.3)g/day for women and 78.6(±37.0)g/day for men.

The work to be presented will allow concluding that fish plays an important role in the Portuguese diet. However, as the characterization of food patterns is an essential tool for building shaped nutritional policies and to assess the associated food consumption environmental impacts, efforts to keep the data updated and comparable along time are necessary.