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Professor Doutor Pedro Rodrigues

ijup@reit.up.pt

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21743 | BABY-SCORE: Decoding Consumer Behaviour in Infant Nutrition Choices

Ana C. Oliveira¹; Ana C. Santos¹; Ana B. Novais¹; Raquel Santos¹; Samuel Tomaz²; Rita Barracosa³; Rebeca Cruz¹; Zita Martins¹

LAQV/REQUIMTE, Bromatology and Hydrology Laboratory, Faculty of Pharmacy of the University of Porto, Portugal¹; Faculty of Nutrition and Food Sciences of the University of Porto, Portugal²; MC Shared Services S.A., Matosinhos, Portugal³

Background & Aim: Infant nutrition lays the foundation for lifelong health, with compelling evidence linking early dietary patterns to adult well-being. This study aims to incorporate consumer preferences into the development of the BABY-SCORE algorithm for infant nutrition, aligning it with both nutritional and sustainability considerations. The research aims to investigate consumer behaviour regarding infant food choices. **Methods:** An online questionnaire was directed at parents, grandparents, or caregivers of infants aged 6 to 12 months. Out of the surveyed consumers, 73 willingly participated, comprising 67.1% women and 32.9% men, with ages ranging from 20 to 85 years and a mean age of 35 years. Emphasis was placed on formulating clear and concise questions, covering aspects such as the frequency of infant food purchases, drivers behind these choices, and characterization of infant food product consumption. The survey guaranteed anonymity, and participation was voluntary. **Results:** Our findings underscore the importance of economic factors and children's preferences in shaping decisions regarding infant food choices. The most influential factors identified were price, promotion, and children's preferences, ranking as the top three considerations. Interestingly, nutritional aspects such as healthcare professionals' recommendations, nutrition facts labels, ingredient lists, and sugar content were rated lower in importance by surveyed consumers. **Conclusions:** The findings highlight a significant demand for accessible nutritional information, emphasizing the necessity of empowering consumers with the knowledge needed to make healthier choices. The BABY-SCORE project directly addresses this gap, contributing significantly to empowering consumers to make healthier and sustainable infant nutrition choices.

Keywords: Infant Food, Consumer Behaviour, Sustainability, Nutrition, Health.

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