

## 23423 | Characterization of the food supply in vending machines at the University of Porto

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**Background & Aim:** Inadequate eating habits are one of major public health challenges, particularly among young adults, namely those transitioning to higher education. Increasing concerns about the nutritional adequacy of vending machines (VM) highlight the need to promote students' awareness and implement measures that increase healthy food choices [1]. This study aimed to characterize food supply in VM at the University of Porto (UP). **Methods:** Data collection took place in April 2024 at UP through a form. Food items were categorized as "permitted" or "prohibited" based on Dispatch 7516-A/2016 and colleges were compared by teaching area and location, following the classification of Directorate General for Higher Education and UP. The sample included 72 VM distributed across 14 faculties, 2 institutes, 3 sports centers, 2 e-learning cafés and the rectory. **Results:** In the VM evaluated in the three UP poles, there was a higher proportion of forbidden products (41.9%-48.6%,  $p=0.839$ ) compared to those permitted (20.8%-29.2%,  $p=0.393$ ), though without statistical significance. Faculties in health sciences had a higher proportion of permitted (29.2%,  $p=0.077$ ) and forbidden products (44.4%,  $p=0.440$ ), though without statistical significance. As the percentage of occupied rows increases there is a tendency for the proportion of permitted products to increase. However, this association is weak and not statistically significant ( $r_s=0.277$ ,  $p=0.079$ ). **Conclusions:** The results highlight the need for regular monitoring and control of FS in VM to identify areas for improvement and develop effective food policies. Increasing the availability of healthy options can encourage students to make healthier dietary choices.

**Keywords:** Vending machines, University of Porto, students, food supply, food choices.

**References:**

[1] Máquinas de venda automática de alimentos/bebidas da Universidade do Porto: Caracterização da oferta alimentar. Acta Portuguesa de Nutrição. Associação Portuguesa de Nutrição. 2021, 24, 46-49.