

The impact of FSANZ labelling changes on knowledge of nutrition and allergens by consumer's, health professional's and allergen sufferers

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Background: Although consumer knowledge of food labels is a well researched topic, the information consumers use on food labels needs to be researched in more detail.

Objective - To discover consumer's, health professional's and allergen sufferers knowledge and perception of changes to food label regulations by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ).

Design – A series of specific questionnaires were used as the primary means of collecting data relating to the perceived changes to food labels and use of food labels.

Outcomes - The overall results from this study show that the majority of respondents are aware of the recent changes to food labels. The knowledge of the changes was basic with respondents noticing the major changes but not the more minor ones. It was found that respondents do not fully utilise the nutritional information provided on food labels to make healthier food choices, due to a lack of understanding of the information provided. Results showed that the new labelling information on allergens, provides allergen sufferers with useful information, however results also indicate a certain dissatisfaction with the use of the term 'May contain...'

Conclusions - The groups of respondents surveyed indicated that the new food labels are an improvement from the old food labels. Respondents are satisfied with the information provided on food labels and agree that an educational tool on food labelling would be beneficial to them to better their understanding of food labels and enable healthier food choices.