

ACCEPTABILITY OF READY-TO-EAT VEGETARIAN FOOD PRODUCTS IN COMPARISON TO SIMILAR PRODUCTS OF ANIMAL ORIGIN. A PILOT STUDY

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INTRODUCCIÓN

In the last years there has been a significant change in Spanish eating habits, largely driven by the current lifestyle that lead to mass production of ready-to-eat foods, i.e. no need to be cooked. Given that plant based diets are becoming popular in Spain, the food industry has increased the manufacturing of ready-to-eat vegetarian products in the aim to satisfy the consumer's demand. Nowadays, a wide variety of products for vegetarian population can be found with similar characteristics to animal origin products.

OBJETIVOS

Sensory attributes and global acceptability of vegetarian and similar non-vegetarian ready-to-eat products were evaluated. Furthermore, the preference between each vegetarian product and its counterpart product of animal origin was analyzed.

MÉTODOS

A non-training panel was used to evaluate sensory attributes and global acceptability of six food products: chopped pork (product 1), mortadella (product 2) and sausages (product 3); each of these animal products and their counterparts of vegetarian origin. A total of 18 non-vegetarian adults were enrolled in the analysis. Participants were verbally instructed to evaluate the products according to their attributes: appearance, odour, taste, mouth texture and global acceptability. The sensorial and acceptability scale was from 1 to 5, where 1= dislike extremely; 2=dislike very much; 3= neither like nor dislike; 4= like moderately; 5= like very much. In addition, open questions were done in order to know their preferences.

RESULTADOS

Global acceptability was significantly higher for the animal compared to the vegetarian products: the most highlighted option in the acceptability scale was "dislike very much" for vegetarian products and "like moderately" for animal origin products. Regarding preference, 83.3%, 77.8% and 94.4% of the volunteers chosen the animal origin options for the product 1, product 2 and product 3 respectively, whereas only 11.1%, 16.7% and 5.6% of the volunteers chosen the vegetarian options of each product. On the other hand, vegetarian products were considered more expensive and healthier than animal products. The appearance was the most highlighted attribute in the vegetarian products while the odour was highpointed in the animal products.

CONCLUSIONES

The food industry has increased the manufacturing of ready-to-eat vegetarian products with the aim to satisfy the vegetarian consumers demand. However, general population prefers animal origin ready-to-eat products in regard to sensorial attributes, although vegetarian products were considered healthier than animal products.

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