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FUNCTIONAL VEGETABLE-BASED SAUSAGES FOR CHILDREN CONSUMPTION

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Key Words: vegetable-based sausages, child consumption, healthy habits, seaweed, functional salt

Introduction

In Europe several campaigns have been developed to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables, mainly by children, because the intervention in early life can lead to a maximum return of benefits in the individual future health (Perry et al., 1998). Furthermore, implementing healthy habits during childhood is more effectively extended to adult stages (Resnicow et al., 1998, Singer et al., 1995). Consequently, the availability of healthy food with functional effect, designed regarding especially child features, as an attractive colour and hand eating, might also contribute to reduce the impact of obesity in European countries.

Thus, the main objective of this study was the conception of a new functional food, 100 % vegetal, for child consumption.

Methods

The development of this functional vegetable-based sausage for child consumption comprised two distinct steps: a) a market study to gather data about parents expectations using a survey questionnaire disseminated by schools, on-line and personal contact; b) the conception of an attractive product based on organic vegetables, herbs, tofu and seaweed as a functional salt.

Results

A total of 900 parents participated in the survey. In 51.3 %, parents offered vegetables only 0-5 times/week, experiencing difficulties regarding neophobic children habits. Only 6.9 % appeared not to be receptive to give their children a functional product with seaweed, despite the lack of information or pediatric advice. The organoleptic preferences chosen for this new product were: discrete odour (57.9 %), soft texture (38.4 %), sausage shape (21 %) and attractive colour (77.9 %).

The demand for attractive sausages suggested the conception of a multicolor product in three mini varieties: carrot, tomato and sugar-beet with tofu (20 %), herbs and 0.8 % of seaweed.

Conclusion

Despite the regular rejection of vegetables, children need to be often exposed to this kind of food. It is important to provide comprehensible information to parents about the real interest of functional foods. It seems essential to foster new food products for children, targeting their critical demands (ex. iodine intake), and optimise the availability of interesting alternatives that might decrease the consumption of unhealthy food.

Key words: vegetable-based sausages, child consumption, healthy habits, seaweed, functional salt.

References

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