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Nutritional quality of infants and young children's diet in the UK: Calculating the optimised "Eat well" plate

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Abstract

Early infant feeding provides nutrients for optimal growth and development. Recent data suggests that children who are overweight at an early age are likely to continue to be overweight. This in turn, increases the risk of developing chronic disease such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and variety of other co-morbidities in early adulthood. Over recent decades, changes in life style and food economy has contributed to shifting dietary patterns leading to increased consumption of energy-dense diets high in fat, particularly saturated fat, and low in unrefined carbohydrates . The aforementioned has potential implications for total energy and fat intake and taste acquisition which may impact negatively on risk of chronic non-communicable disease.

The current eatwell plate is not recommended for children under five years of age, on the basis that less than two years of age have different nutritional requirements and further assumes that 2 – 5 year olds gradually move to eating the same food as the rest of their family in proportions shown on the eatwell plate. The current guideline may therefore, not be as suitable, where greater reliance on nutritional quality of food occurs and the nutritional requirements of under five years of age are different to the adult population. An equivalent '*eat well'* plate will be designed for infants within the age groups of (a) children of 6-12 months, (b) 12-36 months and (c) 36 - 60 months; based on current recommendations by Department of Health (DoH) in order to obtain an empirical module for development of an optimal diet based on current recommendations by DoH during early infancy.

Biography

Dr Nazanin Zand has a thriving research supported by series of scientific publications in reputational journals gaining international praise and recognition. Dr Zand research into nutritional quality of commercial complementary infant foods has attracted national and international media attention. Dr Zand is lecturer in Food Science & Nutrition in the department of Life Sciences at University of Greenwich, with research interests in the nutritional quality and safety of food determined by robust quantitative analysis. Dr Zand is elected member of the Institute of Food Science & Technology, who is actively developing new protocols for analytical based optimizations of the nutritional quality of new food products, health claims, labelling and legislation. Dr Zand has very recently become a Registered Scientist (RSci) and has joined the Journal of Pharmacy and Nutrition (JPANS) as an Editorial Board Member