Dietary intake of whole grain in Irish adults

A. M. Burns, N. F. C. Devlin, B. A. McNulty, M. J. Gibney and A. P. Nugent
UCD Institute of Food and Health, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland.

Limited data exists on dietary intakes of whole grain in an Irish population. The objective of the present study was to characterise whole grain consumption in a representative sample of Irish adults, using data from the National Adult Nutrition Survey (NANS). NANS collected detailed information on habitual food and beverage consumption, using a 4 day food diary, in 1500 Irish adults from 2008–2010. Whole grain foods were identified and information on the grain ingredients was ascribed from food packaging information and by contacting manufacturers. After the exclusion of under reporters, dietary intakes of whole grain were characterised and compliance with dietary recommendations assessed.

Mean intakes (g/d) were 29.4 rising to 36.9 for consumers only, with 79.7% of the Irish population consumers of whole grain. Breakfast and the home were the main contributing meal and location for whole grain consumption, with mean intakes of 15.8 and 26.7 g/d respectively. ‘Breads and rolls’ was the major contributor to whole grain intakes (40.9%) followed by ‘ready to eat breakfast cereals’ (33%). Wheat was the major grain type consumed (68%), with oats also contributing considerably (19%). Only 21% of the population achieved the recommended intakes of 48 g/d. This study indicates that although whole grains are widely consumed by Irish adults, actual levels of intake and compliance with dietary recommendations are low.