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Lifestyle and dietary habits of patients after cardiac rehabilitation enrolled in an Irish Heart Foundation-funded randomised cookery skills intervention: baseline results

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The aim of the present pilot control trial was to evaluate a novel weight-management cookery skills intervention in reducing BMI. All overweight and obese patients who completed cardiac rehabilitation in SVUH in 2006 and 2007 were approached (*n* 172). Baseline results are reported here.

Consenting participants (66.9%, *n* 115; eighty-nine (77.4%) male and twenty-six (22.6%) female) completed a baseline questionnaire (validated extensively in Irish populations⁽¹⁾), which was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS for Windows, version 12.0.1, SPSS Inc., Chicago 2005) and FFQ_Software version 1.0⁽²⁾.

Self-reported mean BMI in men was 29.2 kg/m² (68.7% overweight and 31.3% obese) and in women was 29.7 kg/m² (48% overweight and 52% obese). These results were examined for potential under-reporting against the participants anthropometric measurements recorded in their Cardiac Rehabilitation files, there were no significant differences (mean BMI recorded in their files was 29.8 and 29.6 respectively for men and women). Current smokers comprised 4.5% of men and 11.5% of women, with 57.3% of men and 29.6% of women reporting they were ex-smokers. Mean daily energy intakes for men and women were 11.1 and 8.7 MJ respectively. Compared with other general population surveys^(1,4) and recommendations from the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI⁽³⁾), this population had higher energy, fibre and protein intakes and lower fat intakes (Table). Their % energy intake from carbohydrates was below the recommended levels. Their alcohol intake was comparable with Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance results for the general population⁽⁴⁾. Of the female drinkers 93.8% (61.5% of the female participants reported drinking) and 80.8% of male drinkers (82% of the male participants reported drinking) consumed <14 units and <21 units alcohol per week respectively. Daily salt intake was 9.9 g for men and 7.4 g for women, above the recommendations of 6 g/d. Fe intake for women was below the recommended 14 mg/d at 11.9 mg/d and for men was 16.4 mg/d.

	SLÁN (2002) ⁽¹⁾ (<i>n</i> 5974)	Present study (2008) (<i>n</i> 115)	Recommended levels (FSAI ⁽³⁾)
Energy (MJ/d)	9.30	10.6	
Protein: (g/d)	94.9	118	
% Energy	17.4	19.3	15
Fat: (g/d)	82.0	83.9	
% Energy	32.6	30.0	25–30
Carbohydrates: (g/d)	274	307	
% Energy	47.2	47.4	50–55
Fibre: (g/d)	23.7	29.7	18–24
Alcohol: (ml/d)	8.59	16.1	

Dietary habits in these patients who had completed cardiac rehabilitation are compliant with recommendations but they are not successful in managing their BMI, as overweight, obesity and weight control continues to be a challenge.

1. National Nutritional Surveillance Centre (2003) Dietary habits of the Irish population: Results from SLÁN. <http://www.dohc.ie/publications/pdf/diethab.pdf?direct=1>
2. FFQ_Software version 1.0: UCD School of Public Health and Population Science (2007). Woodview House, Belfield, Dublin 4. Republic of Ireland.
3. Recommended Dietary Allowances for Ireland (1999). Food Safety Authority of Ireland.
4. Gibney M, Flynn A & Strain S (2001) *North/South Ireland Food Consumption Survey*. Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance. Dublin: Food Safety Promotion Board.