

WORK PACKAGE 3.2: HEALTHY DIETS AND DIETARY CHOICE

Work Package (WP) 3.2 aims to understand the linkages between diet, behaviour, lifestyle, and the social and cultural environment in order to improve the health of the Scottish population.

Scotland has a richly deserved international reputation for the quality of its food yet its population has one of the poorest diet-related health records in the developed world and a poor diet and excessive consumption of food and drink contribute to high rates of non-communicable diseases and early death.

Diet quality is strongly linked to socioeconomic status with poor dietary habits and attitudes developing from a very early age. Children's diets are particularly poor and there is evidence of transgenerational transmission of poor health, and poor dietary habits and attitudes. Diet is linked to behaviour, lifestyle and the social and cultural environment in complex ways. Understanding these linkages is essential if we are to improve the health of the Scottish population.

WP 3.2 will study the interplay between dietary health, affordability and sustainability with the aim of improving public health by influencing behaviours. It also seeks to improve the quality of the choices that are currently being made by basing food reformulation on sound nutritional principles.

WP 3.2 will deliver a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of the factors operating within communities and individuals in order to inform the development of more effective health improvement strategies.

WP 3.2 will deliver evidence to answer four research questions:

- What is the relative importance of diet in maintaining health throughout life and how is this modulated by socio-economic status, lifestyle and the individual response to diet?
- How do specific dietary components impact on health, including gut health, weight maintenance, and wellbeing?
- What is the best way to measure sustainability (personal, environmental, social and economic) and how can advice designed to optimise health, sustainability, and affordability be most effectively communicated to consumers?
- How do wider cultural factors, customs and habits influence dietary choices in different settings and social environments and how can a better understanding of these be used to improve food choices in children and adults?

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