

The effectiveness and public acceptability of different behaviour change interventions

Background

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), including heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes, are responsible for 74% of all deaths worldwide. Behavioural interventions are necessary to tackle the health burden associated with NCDs. In recent studies we have found that different types of warning labels have the potential to reduce selection of meat-containing meals and sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs). Other studies have found that changing the availability (or proportion) of healthier vs. unhealthier options, or meat-vs. non-meat options has the potential to change people's selection and consumption of these products. Whilst evidence is accumulating for these and similar interventions, we still don't know the exact mechanisms by which these interventions affect behaviours at the population-level. Furthermore, we are just beginning to examine implications of how the public perceives such interventions, and thereby the support (or acceptability) that the public displays for such policy actions.



Fig. 1. Example warning label (see Hughes, Weick, & Vasiljevic, 2023).

Aims and Methods

The suggested project(s) will employ quantitative surveys and randomised experiments (incl. citizen-science techniques where applicable).

Physiological and eye-tracking methodology may be used where appropriate.

Relevance

The project is interdisciplinary and bridges interests between social and health psychology, behavioural science & medicine, public health, and policy-making.

Training

The candidate's research activity will be based in the Psychology Department at Durham University. Besides a training in general research methods, students will develop skills in advanced statistical techniques (e.g., robust regression modelling).

Suitable for

PhD and MSc by Research students.

References and Further Reading

Hughes, J. P., Weick, M., & Vasiljevic, M. (2023). Impact of pictorial warning labels on meat meal selection: A randomised experimental study with UK meat consumers. *Appetite*, *190*, 107026.

Mantzari, E., Vasiljevic, M., Turney, I., Pilling, M., & Marteau, T. (2018). Impact of warning labels on sugar-sweetened beverages on parental selection: An online experimental study. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, *12*, 259-267.

Vasiljevic, M., Cartwright, E., Pechey, R., Hollands, G. J., Couturier, D. L., Jebb, S. A., & Marteau, T. M. (2017). Physical micro-environment interventions for healthier eating in the workplace: protocol for a stepped wedge randomised controlled pilot trial. *Pilot and Feasibility Studies*, *3*, 1-9.