

Teacher's Perspectives on how Nutrition is embedded into the Curriculum in Wales

Introduction

This study examines teachers' perception of nutrition education in Wales' curriculum. The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) shows an increase in obesity prevalence among white British children (4-5 years old) compared to 2009-2010, while rates decrease in various ethnic groups. This highlights the need for effective treatments and nutrition education.

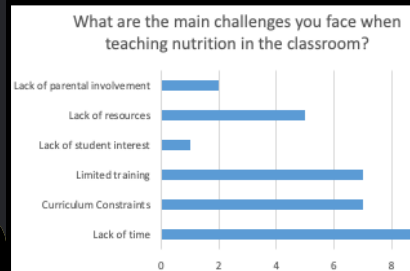
Objectives

- To assess how nutrition is currently incorporated into the curriculum
- To identify challenges teachers face in embedding nutrition education
- To gather recommendations for improving the integration of nutrition in teaching

Methodology

A study involving 13 primary and secondary school teachers in Wales was conducted using a structured questionnaire to assess nutrition integration in the curriculum and teachers' perspectives on nutrition education. The data was analysed using SPSS and NVivo, identifying recurring themes and patterns, and categorising the responses into key themes like educational resources, training needs, and perceived importance of nutrition education.

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What improvements or changes would you suggest to better integrate nutrition education into the teaching curriculum?

- "Practical sessions-cooking/shopping"
- "External companies coming into school and delivering free engaging sessions."
- "Organise trips to the supermarket. Show the kids how they cleverly layout the store to get people to buy certain foods. How to cook healthily is also a massive concern. Children can't cook so end up eating ready meals and fast food."
- "More nutrition imbedded into the curriculum"
- "Allowing more options for them to make and try out different healthy foods"
- "Every pupil as part of the health and well being lessons should receive education on nutrition"
- "Time and adoptions to the curriculum."
- "More knowledge and understanding of what is age appropriate to teach with nutrition."
- "Have external people to come in e.g dietitians to come in and discuss nutrition - to do workshops"
- "Information on local and seasonal products (reducing grocery costs - eating healthier for less money - and also better for the environment). More information on easy meals to have at home. Promoting more nutritional, accessible meals/foods that can improve energy levels and well being. "

Results

46% of teachers agreed that nutrition is an important aspect of the school curriculum 38% strongly agreed with this statement and 15% chose 'neutral'.

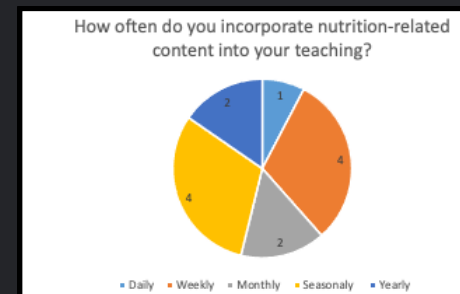
62% of teachers felt that nutrition is adequately covered in the current curriculum, 31% felt that it is poorly covered and 8% were unsure.

92% of teachers said they have not received formal nutrition training,

92% of teachers felt that nutrition should be embeddd across subect areas namely PE, science, health and wellbeing

Discussion and Conclusion

The study aimed to understand the views of teachers on the inclusion of nutrition education in the curriculum. It found that many teachers recognise the importance of nutrition in promoting healthy lifestyles. However, the implementation faces several challenges. Time constraints, a lack of resources, and training gaps hinder the effective delivery of nutrition education. Additionally, curricular limitations imposed by assessments and educational standards often push nutrition and other health education topics to the sidelines. The study concludes that educational authorities must prioritise nutrition as a core subject, provide teachers with necessary tools and training, and explore adaptable curriculum designs to overcome these obstacles. This will help create a healthier generation of students.



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