

Social Research Call

Title:

Children, parents and teachers' perspectives on sugar intake reduction



Acronym: LESSSUGAR4KIDS

Project leader: Marília Prada

Host organisation: Iscte-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

Main purpose of the project: The current project aims to address the problem of excessive sugar intake in Portuguese children by examining the underlying individual (e.g., child's food preferences and perceptions) and contextual (e.g., parents'/teachers' attitudes towards sugar intake) determinants. It is critical to combine the parents, teachers', and children's perspectives to attain this goal.

Design/methodology/approach: The perceptions and attitudes towards excessive sugar intake will be examined in a set of integrated studies, using a qualitative and quantitative approach. The studies combine the perspectives of multiple agents - the child, the caregivers, and the teachers – about children's eating habits, particularly their sugar intake patterns.

Potential results: Our findings will advance the understanding of the problem of children's excessive sugar intake, informing future interventions to address it. Besides scientific publications, results will be disseminated to the main stakeholders (e.g., media, policymakers), developing a toolkit to empower children and educators with strategies to help them reduce sugar intake.

Social relevance of the research: Excessive sugar intake (as well as being overweight) is highly prevalent among Portuguese children, which is associated with multiple negative health outcomes that may emerge during this stage or later on. Our findings can inform the design of policies to improve public health namely to reduce children's sugar intake.

Originality/value of the project: Research on how children perceive sugar, and its consumption remains scarce. LESSSUGAR4KIDS innovates by taking a systemic approach to this socially relevant problem. The project focuses on the child's perspective without overlooking the social agents that may impact their eating habits: parents (including fathers, who are typically understudied) and teachers.