

Invited Speaker Abstract
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Presenting Author & Affiliation:

Englert, Heike
Department of Food & Nutrition
University of Applied Sciences
Muenster
Germany

Title of Presentation

Using the full potential of a plant-based diet - but how to do it? Strategies of the Healthy Lifestyle Community project in Billerbeck, Germany"

1. Abstract

Numerous studies have shown the positive effects of a meat-free diet on major challenges of our times, especially with respect to health and the environment. Already a reduction in meat intake can lead to a lowered risk in the context of chronic disease, can have a positive effect on health care costs, can reduce water and air pollution, and protect natural resources. These findings are increasingly recognized by the general public but they are still not sufficiently put into practice. The central question becomes: How to move towards a plant-based diet?

In order to transfer information as well as practical skills with respect to a plant-based diet to the general public lifestyle interventions on the community level seem to be a useful strategy. As part of the EUREGIO project "Healthy Lifestyle Communities" we are conducting an intensive intervention programme on the topic of healthy living in rural communities in Germany. The focus of attention is the individual citizen with their health needs and their perceived obstacles on the path towards healthy and sustainable lifestyle changes. Such obstacles are addressed on the individual level by means of health coaching and health checks as well as on the community level by means of didactically aligned seminar units conducted in larger groups, workshops, alumni groups, etc. The lifestyle programme primarily addresses four factors of good health: plant-based diet, stress management, physical exercise, and mutual support within the community. Reasons for and against the eating of meat are discussed and explored from various viewpoints with the aim of expanding the participants' consciousness and initiating the process of change. In order to make healthy choices easier, tools such as nudging, self-tracking, and gamification are employed.

2. key references

3. key messages

In order to make healthy choices easier, we need to focus on an individual behaviour level (here we can use nudging, gamification and self-tracking elements) and on an environmental level.