

# Ta'am Mustadam intervention to promote sustainable food choices

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<b>Registration date</b> 21/10/2025	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 26/01/2026	<b>Condition category</b> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

Suboptimal diets are a leading cause of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and early deaths in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Conditions such as diabetes, cancer, and heart disease are highly prevalent, with obesity rates rising sharply in recent decades. At the same time, the UAE faces environmental challenges like water scarcity, poor soil quality, and heavy reliance on food imports, which threaten food security and sustainability. To tackle these issues, national initiatives such as the UAE Food Security Strategy 2051 and the National Action Plan in Nutrition aim to improve both health and environmental resilience. Promoting sustainable diets—those that support health while minimizing environmental impact—is a key strategy. The EAT-Lancet Commission's "planetary health diet" exemplifies this approach, emphasizing more plant-based foods and less meat. However, many existing interventions lack strong theoretical foundations. This study uses the Behavior Change Wheel (BCW) and COM-B model to design an evidence-based intervention that encourages sustainable food choices. It also applies the RE-AIM framework to assess the intervention's reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation, and maintenance, helping to determine its real-world impact and long-term potential to support healthier and more sustainable eating in the UAE.

### Who can participate?

Undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU).

### What does the study involve?

Participants will take part in a 6-week program, followed by a 4-week follow-up period. The program will be delivered through a WhatsApp group, where participants will receive short educational messages, interactive video recipes, and daily reminders at their main mealtime to encourage sustainable food choices. In addition, participants will join hands-on activities held at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences. To help evaluate the program's impact, participants will complete questionnaires before the program starts, right after it ends, and one month later.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

The program could help participants make healthier and more sustainable food choices and

contribute to improving future public health programs in the UAE. On the other hand, the present study poses no risk to participants in any form, either physical or psychological.

Where is the study run from?

The College of Medicine and Health Sciences (CMHS) at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) in the UAE.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

May 2025 to January 2026. The study will start enrolling in September 2025 and run for six weeks, ending at the end of November. It will be followed by a one-month follow-up period.

Who is funding the study?

This research was supported by ASPIRE, the technology program management pillar of Abu Dhabi's Advanced Technology Research Council (ATRC), via the ASPIRE VRI (Virtual Research Institute) Award.

Who is the main contact?

Prof. Carine Platat, PhD, [platatcarine@uaeu.ac.ae](mailto:platatcarine@uaeu.ac.ae)

## Contact information

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Scientific, Principal investigator

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## Additional identifiers

ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT)  
NCT07042412

## Study information

### Scientific Title

Ta'am Mustadam intervention: promoting sustainable food choices among young adults in the UAEU community

### Study objectives

Primary Objectives:

- To evaluate whether the intervention promotes sustainable food choices — specifically greater consumption of fruits and vegetables, plant-based foods (e.g., legumes & nuts), and reduced intake of red and processed meats—at post-intervention and 4-week follow-up.
- To assess changes in food choice motives at post-intervention and 4-week follow-up.

Secondary Objectives:

- To examine improvements in knowledge, intentions, and practices related to sustainable diets at post-intervention and 4-week follow-up.
- To assess changes in energy and nutrient intakes at post-intervention and 4-week follow-up.
- To evaluate the intervention's real-world impact using the RE-AIM framework.

### Ethics approval required

Ethics approval required

### Ethics approval(s)

approved 19/05/2025, Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Research and Sponsored Projects Office, United Arab Emirates University, P.O. Box: 15551, Al Ain, -, United Arab Emirates; +971 3 713 6597; research.office@uaeu.ac.ae), ref: ERSC\_2025\_6704

### Study design

Quasi-experimental pre-post design with a 4-week follow-up

### Primary study design

Interventional

### Study type(s)

Quality of life

## **Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Promoting sustainable food choices among young adults

## **Interventions**

This 6-week pilot intervention will use a quasi-experimental pre-post design with a 4-week follow-up, targeting 80 participants at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences (CMHS). The intervention focuses on increasing the consumption of fruits, vegetables, and plant-based foods (e.g., legumes & nuts), and reducing the consumption of red/processed meat.

The Ta'am Mustadam intervention, guided by the BCW and BCT, will consist of the following elements:

1. **Education:** In the mornings at 9:00 AM, educational messages will be shared via WhatsApp twice weekly (Tuesdays and Fridays), dietary tips on Wednesdays, and video recipes on Saturdays. Additionally, the Planetary Health Plate will be printed on a retractable banner and placed outside the entrance of the CMHS canteen.
2. **Behavioral Practice:** This component engages participants with sustainable eating habits through biweekly cooking competitions and hands-on snack preparation activities held on Thursdays.
3. **Environmental restructuring:** Daily reminders and nudges will be delivered through WhatsApp messages, timed before participants' main meals, to promote the consumption of sustainable food choices.

Ta'am Mustadam intervention will be evaluated using the RE-AIM framework.

## **Intervention Type**

Behavioural

## **Primary outcome(s)**

1. Adoption of sustainable food choices assessed by dietary intake. Dietary intake will be measured through a validated English version of the Food Frequency Questionnaire (FFQ) tailored for the UAE population at pre-intervention (1 week before the start of the intervention period), post-intervention (at the end of the 6-week intervention period), and follow-up (4 weeks after the intervention end)
2. The extent of changes in food choice motives. Food choice motives will be measured using the Food Choice Questionnaire tailored for Arabic-speaking countries at pre-intervention (1 week before the start of the intervention period), post-intervention (at the end of the 6-week intervention period), and follow-up (4 weeks after the intervention end)

## **Key secondary outcome(s)**

The following secondary outcome measures will be assessed at pre-intervention (1 week before the start of the intervention period), post-intervention (at the end of the 6-week intervention period), and follow-up (4 weeks after the intervention end), unless stated:

1. Changes in knowledge towards sustainable diets will be measured through participants' agreement with five statements adapted from a validated questionnaire
2. Changes in behavioral intentions towards sustainable diets will be measured based on participants' intent to adopt more sustainable behaviors, using an adapted questionnaire
4. Changes in self-reported behaviors towards sustainable diets will be measured by participants' weekly consumption of 6 food groups (e.g., "How often do you consumed fruits in a typical week") using five intake frequencies ("0 times", "1–2 times", "3–4 times", "5–6 times",

“seven or more times”)

5. Changes in baseline energy and nutrient intake will be measured through a validated English version of the Food Frequency Questionnaire (FFQ) tailored for the UAE population

6. The implementation of the Ta'am Mustadam intervention at the participant level will be measured using an evaluation form. This questionnaire contains yes/ no questions, Likert-scale questions, and an open-ended question to collect detailed feedback from participants at post-intervention (at the end of the 6-week intervention period)

**Completion date**

31/01/2026

## **Eligibility**

**Key inclusion criteria**

Students (both undergraduates & postgraduates) at CMHS

**Participant type(s)**

Healthy volunteer

**Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

**Age group**

Mixed

**Lower age limit**

18 years

**Upper age limit**

110 years

**Sex**

All

**Total final enrolment**

80

**Key exclusion criteria**

Not signing the informed consent

Reporting history of food allergies or any food intolerances (e.g., celiac disease, lactose intolerance, nut allergy, etc.)

Reporting any medical condition that might directly affect eating patterns (e.g., Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, Crohn's disease, Irritable bowel syndrome)

Under medication that affect eating patterns

Being pregnant or breastfeeding

Following a vegan or vegetarian diet

**Date of first enrolment**

01/09/2025

**Date of final enrolment**

13/10/2025

## Locations

**Countries of recruitment**

United Arab Emirates

**Study participating centre****College of Medicine and Health Sciences**

Al-Ain, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 15551

Al-Ain

United Arab Emirates

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## Sponsor information

**Organisation**

United Arab Emirates University

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/01km6p862>

## Funder(s)

**Funder type**

Research organisation

**Funder Name**

ASPIRE

**Alternative Name(s)****Funding Body Type**

Private sector organisation

**Funding Body Subtype**

Research institutes and centers

**Location**

United Arab Emirates

# Results and Publications

## Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study will be available upon request from Prof. Carine Platat, [platatcarine@uaeu.ac.ae](mailto:platatcarine@uaeu.ac.ae).

- Type of data: De-identified participant data, including demographics, food choice motives, knowledge, intentions, practices, behaviors toward sustainable diets, and dietary intake (FFQ).
- Timing: The anonymized dataset will be made available upon reasonable request approximately 12 months after publication of the primary study findings and will remain accessible for 5 years thereafter.
- Consent: All participants will provide written informed consent, including permission for the use and potential sharing of their anonymized data for academic research purposes
- Anonymization: All personal identifiers (university email address) will be removed. Each participant will be assigned a unique study code to ensure confidentiality.
- Restrictions: Data sharing will comply with the UAEU Human Research Ethics Committee approval (ERSC\_2025\_6704). All data access requests will be reviewed and approved by the Principal Investigator (Prof. Carine Platat), following UAEU’s data protection and confidentiality policies.
- Additional comments: Researchers requesting data must sign a data-sharing agreement to ensure use solely for non-commercial, academic purposes. Shared datasets must not be redistributed to third parties, and secondary analyses should acknowledge the original study.

## IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request

## Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Participant information sheet</a>			21/10/2025	No	Yes
<a href="#">Participant information sheet</a>	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes