

# The effect of ecolabelling on the environmental impact of food purchases in worksite cafeterias

<b>Submission date</b> 01/04/2021	<b>Recruitment status</b> No longer recruiting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered
		<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b> 07/04/2021	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 12/06/2023	<b>Condition category</b> Nutritional, Metabolic, Endocrine	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

The environmental impacts of different types of foods are highly variable. Previous research from studies conducted online using a virtual supermarket platform suggests that labels showing environmental impact scores were effective at encouraging people to select more sustainable products. But it remains unclear whether these labels are effective in a real-world setting or remain effective after repeated exposure. The current study aims to test the impact of eco-labels on the environmental impact of foods purchased from worksite cafeterias.

### Who can participate?

We will recruit GB-based worksites that have electronic point-of-sale tills, are catered by our foodservice partner, and are able to provide data at a detailed enough level to identify specific meals sold.

### What does the study involve?

The intervention involves displaying ecolabels on cafeteria menus for main meal and sandwich options. The labels show environmental impacts of the labelled products as one of 5 letters (A-E), each with its own colour (from dark green to dark red).

To test whether the ecolabels are effective, 38 worksite cafeterias will be randomised so that half (19 sites) display ecolabels and the other half continue selling their products with no additional labelling. We will use the sales data recorded from the worksite cafeterias' tills to examine whether purchases change when the ecolabels are displayed.

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

There are no foreseeable risks in taking part. Similarly, there are no specific benefits to individuals taking part. The participating caterer will gain insights into whether ecolabels influence consumer behaviour which may inform their sustainability strategy

### Where is the study run from?

The University of Oxford (UK) is running the study in collaboration with a foodservice partner company.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?  
October 2020 to June 2021.

Who is funding the study?  
This research is funded by the Wellcome Trust (UK), Our Planet Our Health (Livestock, Environment and People - LEAP), award number 205212/Z/16/Z

Who is the main contact?  
Dr Brian Cook, Senior Researcher, brian.cook@phc.ox.ac.uk

## Contact information

**Type(s)**  
Scientific

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## Additional identifiers

**Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)**  
Nil known

**Protocol serial number**  
WT 205212/Z/16/Z

## Study information

**Scientific Title**  
A randomised controlled trial of the impact of food ecolabelling on the environmental impact of purchases from worksite cafeterias

**Study objectives**  
Introducing ecolabels indicating the relative environmental impact of different food options will reduce the environmental impact of overall purchases from the worksite cafeterias

**Ethics approval required**  
Old ethics approval format

## **Ethics approval(s)**

Approved 02/12/2020, Central University Research Ethics Committee, University of Oxford (Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JD, UK; +44(0)1865 616577; ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk), ref: R72710/RE001

## **Study design**

Interventional randomized controlled trial

## **Primary study design**

Interventional

## **Study type(s)**

Prevention

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

Improving the sustainability and healthiness of diets

## **Interventions**

Worksites are randomised according to matched-pairs randomisation (based on mean sales) to either ecolabel or control (no label) conditions. In the ecolabel condition, labels indicating the relative environmental impact of food options (in the form of a grade from 'A' to 'E', displayed on a colour-coded globe logo) will be placed on main meals, pre-made salads, soups and sandwiches for a period of 12 weeks.

In the control condition, no changes will be made during the study period.

## **Intervention Type**

Behavioural

## **Primary outcome(s)**

Environmental impact of purchases: Measured by the mean environmental impact score for purchased products across a week in each worksite cafeteria. The outcome will be calculated from sales data recorded via electronic point-of-sale tills throughout the 12 weeks of the trial, combined with data on the environmental impact of each food option.

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

1. Impact on revenue: Measured by the total weekly revenue (£GBP) from each cafeteria, based on sales data recorded via electronic point-of-sale tills throughout the 12 weeks of the trial
2. Impact on transactions: Measured by the total number of transactions per week in each cafeteria, based on sales data recorded via electronic point-of-sale tills throughout the 12 weeks of the trial
3. Health impact: Measured by total energy (kcal) purchased weekly in each worksite cafeteria (controlling for the total number of transactions), calculated from sales data recorded via electronic point-of-sale tills throughout the 12 weeks of the trial, combined with data on the energy content of each food option

## **Completion date**

31/07/2021

## **Eligibility**

**Key inclusion criteria**

Recruitment is conducted at the worksite-level.

We will recruit GB-based worksites that:

1. Have electronic point-of-sale tills
2. Are catered by our foodservice partner
3. Are able to provide data at a detailed enough level to identify specific meals sold

**Participant type(s)**

Healthy volunteer

**Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

**Age group**

Adult

**Sex**

All

**Key exclusion criteria**

Not meeting the inclusion criteria

**Date of first enrolment**

09/04/2021

**Date of final enrolment**

12/04/2021

**Locations****Countries of recruitment**

United Kingdom

England

**Study participating centre****University of Oxford**

Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences

Radcliffe Primary Care Building

Radcliffe Observatory Quarter

Woodstock Road

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**Sponsor information**

**Organisation**

University of Oxford

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/052gg0110>

## Funder(s)

**Funder type**

Charity

**Funder Name**

Wellcome Trust

**Alternative Name(s)**

Wellcome, WT

**Funding Body Type**

Private sector organisation

**Funding Body Subtype**

Trusts, charities, foundations (both public and private)

**Location**

United Kingdom

## Results and Publications

**Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan**

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are not expected to be made available due to confidentiality.

**IPD sharing plan summary**

Not expected to be made available

**Study outputs**

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Results article</a>		01/12/2022	12/06/2023	Yes	No