

Assessing the adequacy of the DREC's food capitations for students of a primary school

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Children food habits may assure complete development and growth and may contribute to a healthy life. Schools have an important role on adoption of healthy eating habits working together with health professionals and families.

One of the main concerns of Education Ministry is food at school. Recently the Division of Innovation and Curricular Development created a Circular 14/DGIDC/2007, legislating the organization of school canteens, including general rules about meals to be served at schools as well as the individual food quantities necessary for each age group.

The aim of this work was to evaluate the nutritional adequacy of meals served at elementary schools at Guarda municipality, taking into consideration the individual quantities defined by Central Region Division of Education (DREC) and to evaluate the amount of food wastage.

This work was developed at a school canteen located at an elementary school of S. Miguel Schools, Guarda. There were included on these study 41 individuals that were served with the food amounts indicated by DREC. A descriptive correlation study was developed and the coorte was considered prospective. A convenience sample was used by non probabilistic sampling.

The amount of wastage of each meal was account individually and registered on an Excel Spreadsheet. Nutritional evaluation of two weeks schools menus was developed using the System of Planning and Evaluation of Scholl Meals (SPARE).

There was no wastage of soup since the totality of children under evaluation consumed the amount of soup served. Concerning the main dish the main meal components waste were fish and vegetables. No significant amounts of fruit were wasted.

Besides the need of school policies to improve children consumption of fish and vegetables associated to initiatives involving families, teachers and school assistants it will probably be also necessary to adjust individual food amounts indicated by the DREC in order to reduce food wastage and help controlling meals cost.