

CHED'S PERCEPTION ON NUTRITION AND HEALTH

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Recently, due to several socio-economic factors such as time scarcity, there is a tremendous increase in convenience in food preparation. To meet this demand, an increase in the establishment of catering units throughout the country happened. Eating out became an essential part of consumers' lifestyles around the globe. With the rise in obesity and non-communicable diseases such as CVD and diabetes, there is a need for healthy eating out practices and healthy food items on the menus. Therefore, this study surveyed random chefs in various catering establishments distributed randomly within Hungary between February and April 2021. We surveyed them regarding their perceptions on four aspects; health, nutrition, nutritional practices, and consumer concerns in the context of menu planning and food service. The results showed that chefs strongly agree that catering professionals consider nutrition an essential factor during menu planning and creation. The chefs also perceive that the number of customer requests for modified menu items was increasing. However, they do not perceive that consumers consider nutrition as an essential factor when selecting a restaurant. The study found that the chefs' working experience does not affect their perceptions of the four aspects. The survey also indicated that chefs no longer perceive that the preparation of low-fat foods requires additional work. They can be made equal in taste to foods containing higher amounts of fat. Additionally, chefs confirmed that the finished products' quality is the primary concern during food preparation and service.