

Eating out of home in Vietnamese adolescents

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Background: Studies have reported a positive association of eating out home (EOH) and increased energy intake or weight gain in industrialized countries. Increased EOH is believed to be an important driver of dietary transition in developing countries such as Vietnam but data to substantiate this hypothesis are lacking.

Objective: To describe EOH in Vietnamese adolescents and to document which socio-economic factors are associated with it.

Setting: HaNam province (rural) and HaNoi city in Vietnam

Measurements: Data was collected in a cross-sectional study of 1172 adolescents in 4 rural and 4 urban schools. Food intake data was collected using a 1-day 24-hour recall. A subsample of 870 adolescents filled out a questionnaire which collected data on accumulated household wealth, amount of pocket money, educational status of the parents, gender and locality.

Results: EOH accounted for 21% of the total intake of energy, vitamin A, Fe and Zn on a daily basis. It provided 41% of the fruits and vegetables consumed per day. EOH was inversely associated with total energy intake. Adolescents who ate more OH had a higher dietary diversity and energy from fat intake, higher intakes of fruit, meat and meat products and sugary products ($P < 0.001$). Independent of household wealth and educational status of the parents, EOH was positively associated with living in urban areas ($P < 0.001$), being female ($P < 0.001$) and having higher amounts of pocket money ($P < 0.001$).

Conclusions: Eating OH is important in the diet of Vietnamese adolescents and potentially reflects important dietary changes in this population.