

Consumer Perception of Omega-3 Enriched Foods

Joachim Scholderer, MAPP, University of Aarhus

Aarhus, Denmark

The public health potential of n-3 PUFAs can only be realized if consumer products are developed that are acceptable to consumers, and if they are marketed in such a way that a substantial part of the population is reached. Unfortunately, only little research has been conducted up until now that takes the numerous factors into account which determine market success. Two studies were conducted in order to fill this gap. Study 1 was a representative survey of the adult Danish population (N=1000). Participants completed a questionnaire on current dietary habits, personal health status, disease occurrence among friends and family, perceived vulnerability to chronic diseases, expected benefits of n-3 PUFAs in different delivery systems (foods naturally rich in n-3 PUFAs, n-3 enriched foods, n-3 supplements), perceived fit between different functional ingredients and carrier foods, perceived self-efficacy, and intentions to change dietary habits. Study 2 was a follow-up to Study 1, conducted one year later (N=500). Participants completed a questionnaire on actual dietary changes initiated in the year since Study 1. In addition, they participated in a series of choice experiments in which the factors carrier food, enrichment with n-3 PUFAs, brand, price, advertising exposure, and exposure to generic information about health benefits of n-3 PUFAs were varied. Data from both studies were analyzed by means of structural equation modeling and nested logit modeling. Results are presented in terms of predictive models of adoption of n-3 enriched foods, and their substitution relationships with foods naturally rich in n-3 PUFAs and n-3 supplements. Furthermore, price response functions and advertising response functions are estimated. Finally, recommendations are derived concerning choice of carrier foods and combination with different branding and targeting strategies.