

Acceptance of iodized salt in Germany

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INTRODUCTION

Germany is a region of endemic iodine deficiency. One third of the German population suffers on iodine deficiency. The estimated daily intake of iodine is in average about 60µg. The recommendations are 200µg.

A simple and efficient preventive measure is to use iodized salt, which is propagated in Germany. German food law was amended in 1993 to facilitate this in industrial food processing.

RESULTS

Iodized salt is used in every other German household:

Answers: yes: 53,2% (1); no: 35,0% (2); ?: 11,5%

(1) More "yes": in East Germany (72,7%), by women (59,1%) and by higher education and family size.
If "yes" - then 78,7% use iodized salt daily.

(2) Reasons for "no":

56,1% health implication of iodine is unknown

13,7% iodine salt is unknown

27,3% supplement is not important, has risks

Iodized salt is used by most German food processors and caterers (figure), but many food manufacturers indicated economic reasons for the low acceptance.

The population has positive attitudes towards iodized food products and meals, only less than 10% refuse to buy such products.

OBJECTIVES

The mandator of this project was the German Federal Ministry of Health* and the following objectives for evaluation were given:

- acceptance of iodized salt by the German population;
- use of iodized salt in food processing and catering;
- survey of market data on iodized salt.

METHODS

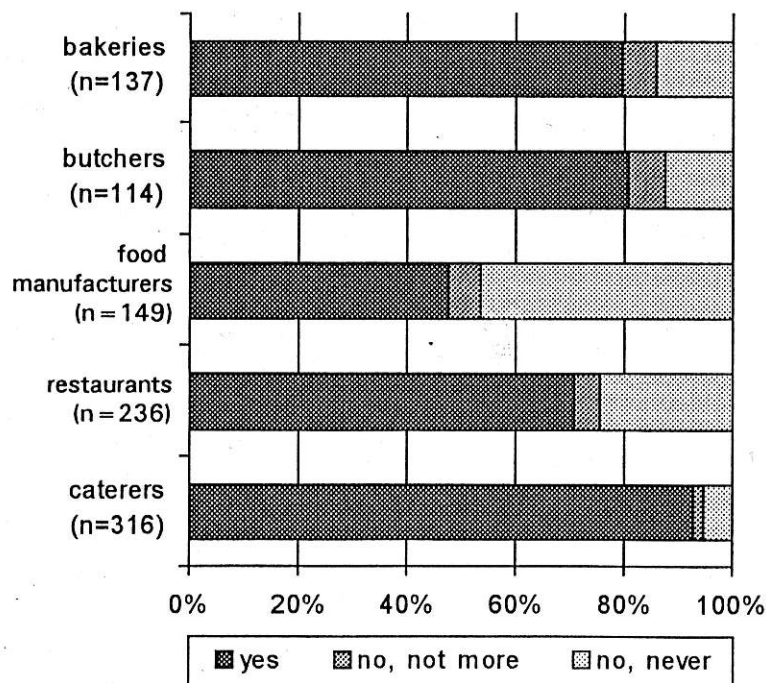
Interview survey of a representative sample of total population (> 14y, N=2500); in November 1994; done by GFM-Getas, Hamburg.

Questionnaires were mailed in February 1995 to bakeries (N=300; random selection), butchers (N=300), food manufacturers (N=300), restaurants (N=600) and caterers (N=600).

CONCLUSIONS

The results show a wide acceptance of iodized salt within the German population. Nevertheless there are continuing deficits of information about the importance of iodine. It is recommended to maintain the efforts to propagate usage of iodized salt.

Use of iodized salt in food processing and meal services (Germany 1995)



*[for the German Nutrition Report 1996 (Ernährungsbericht 1996); Editor: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ernährung (DGE), (German Society for Nutrition), Frankfurt/M, 1996; ISBN 3-921606-33-0; order adress: DGE, Im Vogelsang 40, D-60488 Frankfurt/M]