

What is preventing or facilitating children's fruit and vegetable intake in rural and remote Western Australia?

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Aims: Identification of key barriers and facilitators of WA children's fruit and vegetable consumption to inform a) policies to support provision of affordable, quality fruit and vegetables to rural/remote areas and b) tailored community-based interventions.

Methods: Existing literature was reviewed and key informant interviews were guided by a semi-structured interview guide relating to amounts, barriers and facilitators for fruit and vegetable consumption; relationship between food insecurity and fruit and vegetable consumption; motivation towards and strategies to increase consumption. Thirteen individual interviews were conducted. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, de-identified and categorised by occupation type. A thematic analysis using QSR NVivo 10 grouped commonly occurring themes.

Relevance: In the Australian and WA context, a dearth of literature relates to children's fruit and vegetable consumption in regional/remote locations, contributing to the lack of understanding regarding underlying barriers. This research will influence policy and facilitate relevant and tailored health promotion interventions specific for WA issues.

Results: Thirteen participants were involved in this study. Interviews included 30% (n= 4) Health Workers, 23% (n=3) Store Owners/Managers, 23% (n=3) School Workers, 23% (n=3) Youth/Family Workers. Statements related to barriers and enablers to children's fruit and vegetable consumption. Top barriers included lack of knowledge/skills among children and parents, inaccessibility in local shop and poor quality fruit and vegetables, while top enablers included school provision (via a school breakfast program, lunch program, or dedicated fruit/vegetable break), community and home accessibility and taste.

Conclusions: Health practitioners should utilise this evidence to create informed community initiatives while policy-makers can base future policies on positively influencing the most significant barriers and enablers to fruit and vegetable consumption in regional/remote areas based on findings of this research.

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