

Nutritional quality of children's menus in restaurants: does cuisine type matter?

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Restaurant meals marketed towards children have previously been shown to be energy-dense and nutritionally poor.⁽¹⁾ However, it is unknown whether the nutritional quality of children's menus vary depending on the cuisine type. This study aimed to investigate differences in the nutritional quality of children's menus by cuisine type in restaurants located in Perth, Western Australia. A cross-sectional study was conducted in Perth, Western Australia. Children's menus ($n = 139$) from the five most prevalent restaurant cuisine types in Perth (i.e., Chinese, Modern Australian, Italian, Indian, Japanese) were assessed using the Children's Menu Assessment Tool (CMAT; range -5 to 21 with lower scores denoting lower nutritional quality) and the Food Traffic Light (FTL) system. Nonparametric ANOVA was used to test for a significant difference in total CMAT scores among cuisine types. Total CMAT scores were low for all cuisine types (range -2 to 5), with a significant difference between cuisine types (Kruskal–Wallis $H = 58.8$, $p < 0.001$). The highest CMAT score by cuisine type was Modern Australian (mean = 2.27 , $SD = 1.41$) followed by Italian (mean = 2.02 , $SD = 1.02$), Japanese (mean = 1.80 , $SD = 2.39$), Indian (mean = 0.30 , $SD = 0.97$) and Chinese (mean = 0.07 , $SD = 0.83$). When using the FTL for assessment, Japanese cuisine had the highest percentage of green food items (44%), followed by Italian (42%), Modern Australian (38%), Indian (17%) and Chinese (14%). Overall, the nutritional quality of children's menus were poor regardless of cuisine type. However, children's menus from Japanese, Italian and Modern Australian restaurants scored better in terms of nutritional quality than children's menus from Chinese and Indian restaurants.

Reference

1. Serrano EL & Jemma VB (2009) *J Nutr Educ Behav* **41**, 132–137.