

Edible insects – A pilot study on how knowledge and information can be a motor to change

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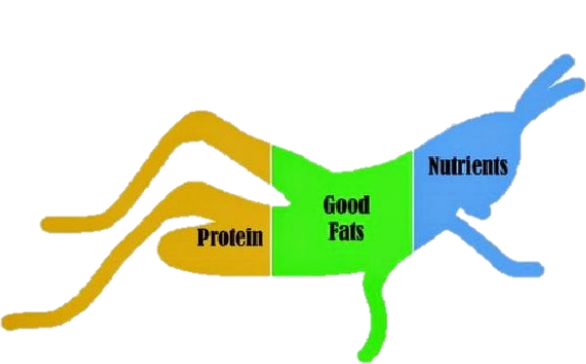
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INTRODUCTION & AIM

Entomophagy has been a traditional practice from time immemorial in many areas of the globe where eating insects is part of the people's cultures and dietary patterns. However, in other regions, consumers feel a certain neophobia and disgust towards eating insects.



From a nutritional point of view, edible insects (EIs) are very rich in macro as well as micro nutrients. Additionally, they constitute a much more sustainable source of animal protein than other more conventional sources like beef or pork.



The aim of this pilot study was to investigate the perceptions, attitudes and knowledge of a small group of individuals regarding EIs, on a longitudinal approach, before and after listening to an educational talk about EIs.



METHOD

Two small surveys were prepared and applied to a case study sample of adults, one to be applied before the talk and the other to be applied after.

The talk lasted 60 minutes and addressed various topics related to edible insects, including tradition, neophobia, sustainability, nutrition, and health effects.

Survey A
(before talk)

Talk about EIs
(60 minutes)

Survey B
(After talk)

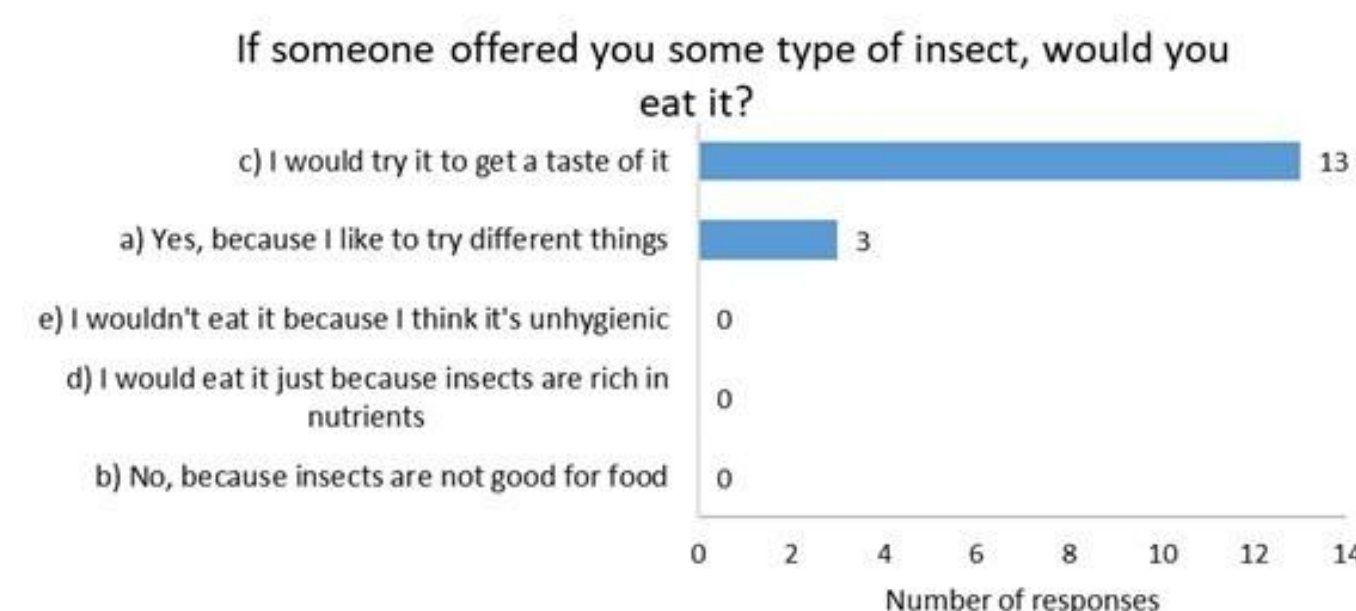
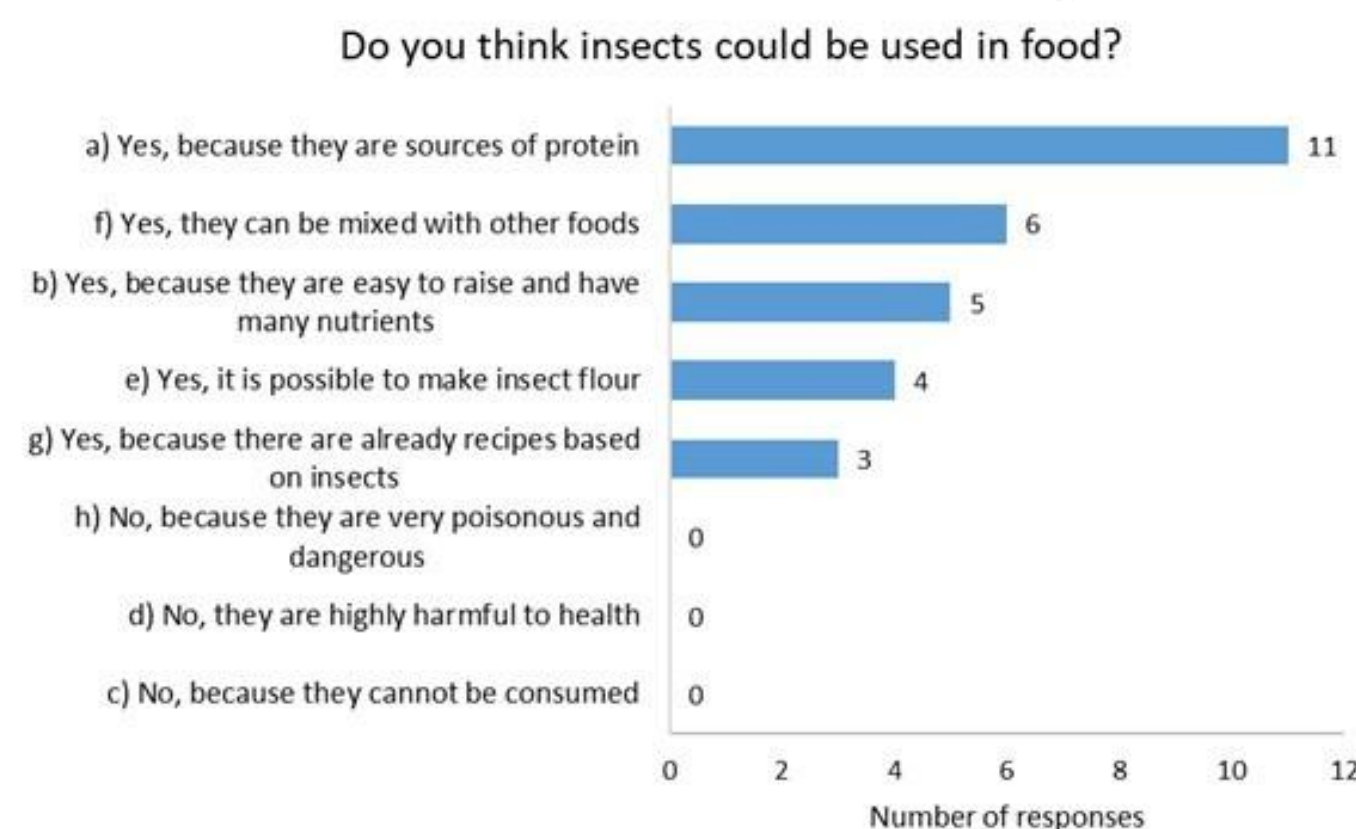
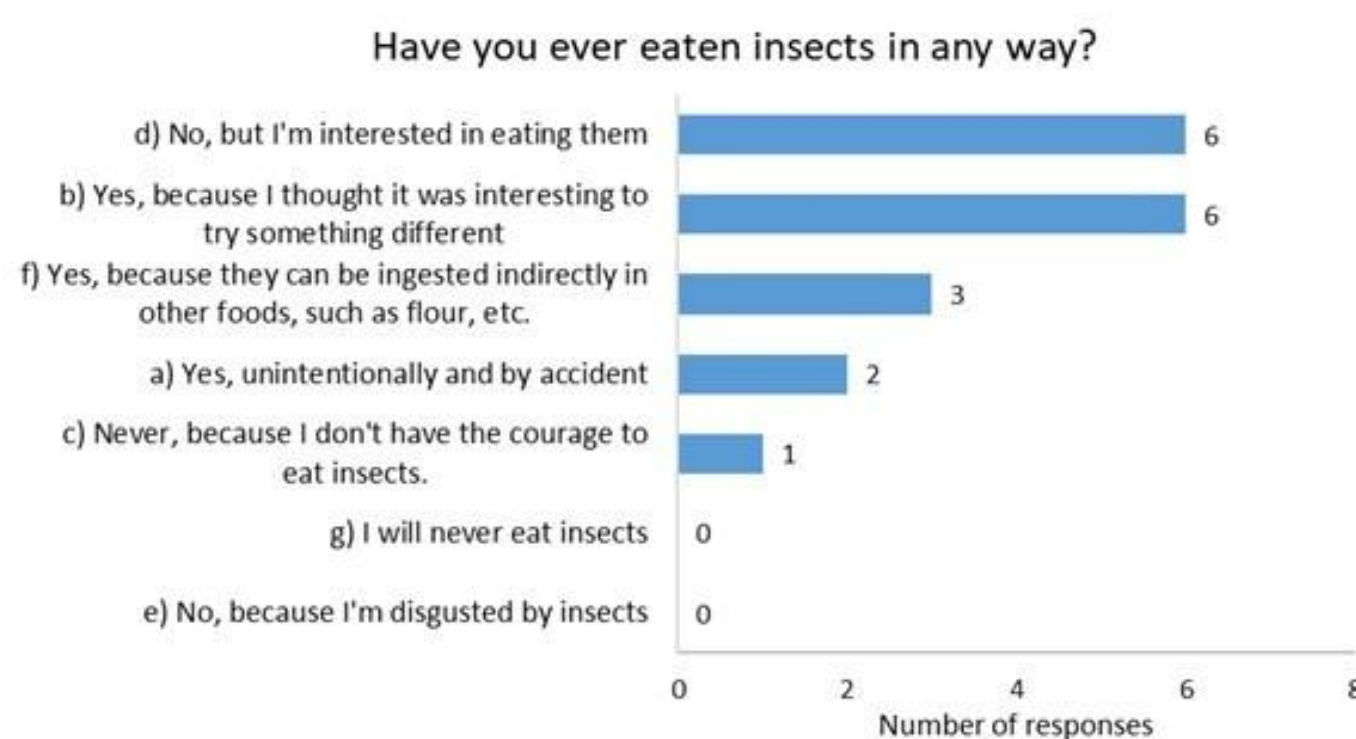
The participants were mainly female (76%). Two participants were aged between 45 and 50 years, while the other 15 were aged between 20 and 30 years.



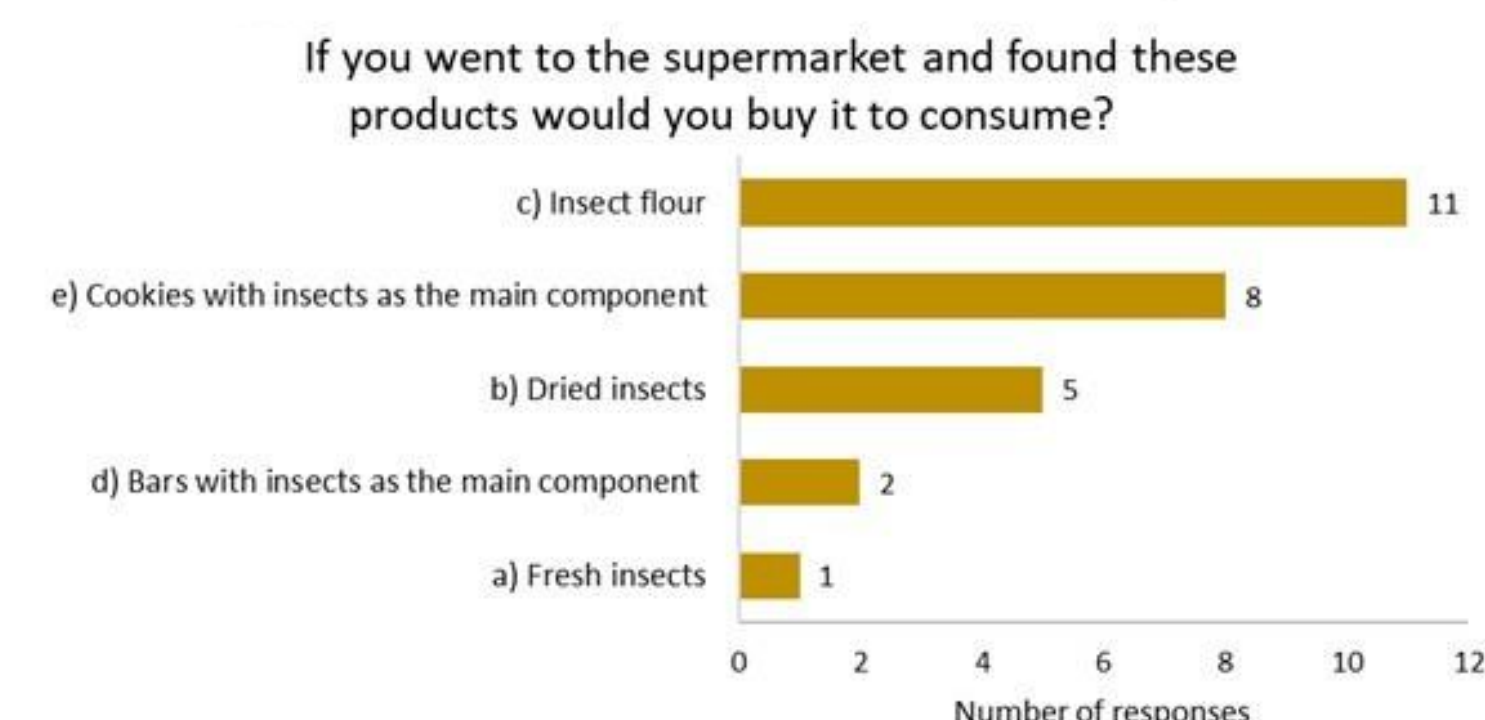
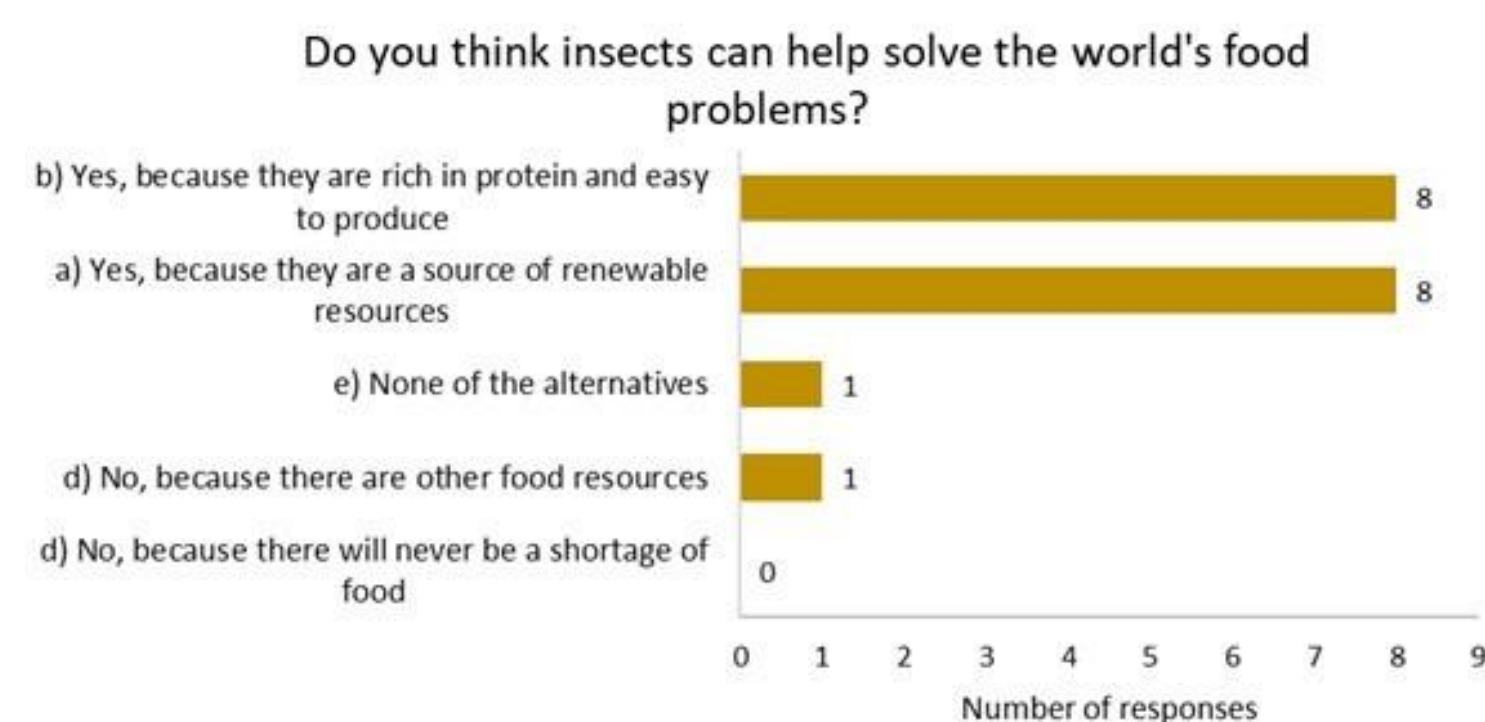
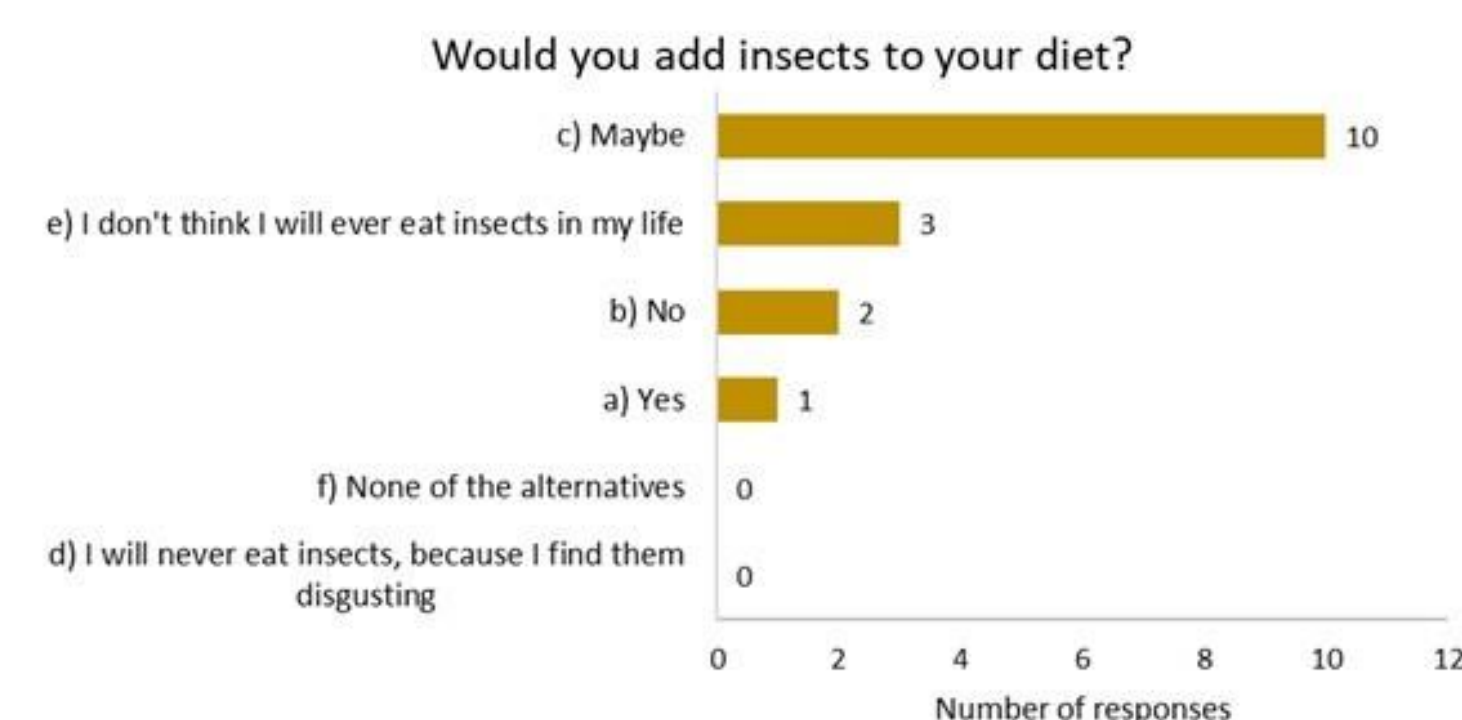
RESULTS

- Participants showed a very positive evaluation of the talk, finding it informative, interesting and useful.
- They considered that the talk contributed to their improvement in knowledge about insects as foods.
- When the participants were asked if they knew the term entomophagy, most of them responded that they did not know, and only four replied positively.
- Some of the participants had consumed insects before, but most of the participants admitted that they were not considering consuming EIs on a regular basis.
- Still, they were more willing to consume foods containing insects, if they were disguised as ingredients, such as in cookies or pastas.

Survey A (Before talk)



Survey B (After talk)



Word cloud of the insects (not necessarily edible) mentioned by the participants.

CONCLUSION

This pilot study showed the usefulness of targeted interventions as a way to increase knowledge and neutralise misconceptions or prejudices related to edible insects, contributing to incentivise the shift to more sustainable diets.

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