

# Consumer attitudes and acceptability towards innovative functional foods: A retrospective epidemiological study in Greece and Cyprus

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## Introduction

The trend toward healthier food choices is driving the development of innovative functional foods. Understanding consumer perceptions is crucial for effective promotional strategies. In Greece, studies indicate that while awareness of the functional foods' health benefits, it remains limited.

## Aim

This study aims to evaluate the opinions and acceptance of Greek and Cypriot consumers regarding functional foods.

## Methods

Participants were recruited through social invitations from May 2018 to January 2022. Adults who provided consent participated in personal interviews at the Human Nutrition Unit, completing a validated questionnaire on functional food opinions and acceptability, consisting of 38 questions.

The study recorded sociodemographic characteristics and assessed participants' knowledge of functional foods and bioprocesses, as well as their feelings (e.g., confidence, fear) regarding novel functional foods. Factors influencing consumption decisions, along with expectations, motivations, and preferences, were evaluated.

Data were analyzed using SPSS 17.0, employing descriptive statistics, chi-square, and Spearman correlation tests (significance level 0.05).



## Results

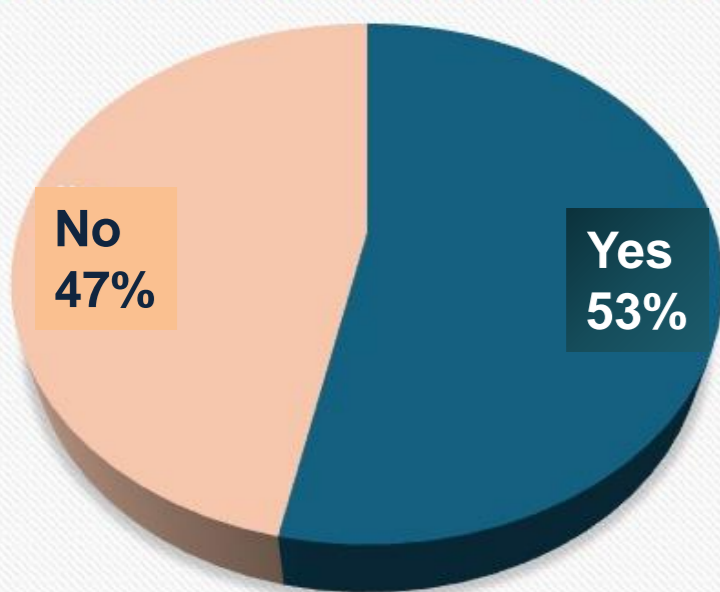


1933 Total  
726 Men  
1207 Women

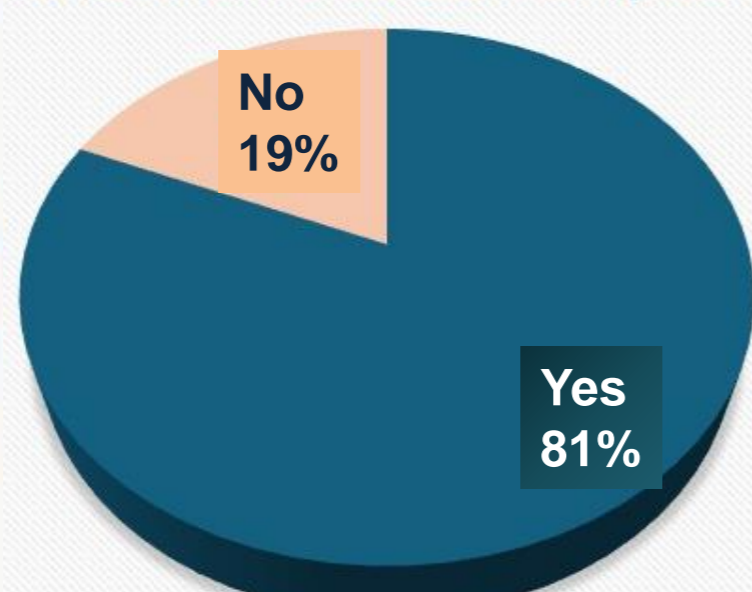


18 regions from Greece & Cyprus

Awareness for functional foods



Functional foods consumption



- Knowledge about functional foods positively influences purchase decisions (14.9% of total population)
- 1,324 willing participants to pay more for innovative functional foods
- Only 42.6% of the study population had knowledge of food bioprocesses
- 36.9% of the study population were neutral toward ethical interventions in food composition
- Lower educational levels corresponded to decreased confidence and daring in trying novel foods ( $p = 0.00$ ,  $r_s = 0.05$ ,  $0.07$ )

## Results



## Conclusions

While many incorporate natural functional foods into their diets, hesitation exists regarding innovative functional foods by bioprocesses. This reticence is linked to neophobia and insufficient awareness of health benefits. Enhancing consumer knowledge is vital for fostering confidence and acceptance of novel functional foods.

## References

<https://doi.org/10.1111/ijes.12202>  
<https://doi.org/10.1533/9781845692506.4.412>