



International Visiting Researcher Teresa Gontijo de Castro
University of Auckland
Department of Nutrition & Dietetics

Aotearoa New Zealand:
Country's context, population nutrition, and the healthiness of
food environments

About the Presenter

Dr Teresa Gontijo de Castro is a Dietician and has worked as a Senior Research Fellow for the University of Auckland since 2015. She was previously employed as an Adjunct Professor at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (2009-2015) and at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (2006-2009), Brazil. She has expertise in nutritional epidemiology and monitoring of population nutrition and food environments. Her current main research interests are in leveraging the use of datasets to help fill, partially, national gaps of information on indicators of children's diets and nutrition; examining the impact of diet quality in early life on health and wellbeing outcomes throughout the life course and; monitoring the healthiness of food environments. Teresa advocates for the implementation of population health policies and interventions that improve the healthiness of the food environments, the affordability of healthy foods, and control of the marketing of unhealthy foods to kids.

Overview of the presentation

In this talk, Dr Castro will provide context about Aotearoa New Zealand, and will present the research pieces she has been leading that have direct and relevant implications for health equity by improving population nutrition. Child excess adiposity currently affects 1/3 of 2–24-year-olds in Aotearoa. Despite this scenario, the country has limited national information on children's diets and feeding practices and on the prevalence (and trends) of child excess adiposity disaggregated by key sociodemographic characteristics. This is crucial information required to examine if a country is on track to achieving the children's global nutrition targets and to develop policies and interventions that ensure that we meet these targets to promote equitable outcomes of health, well-being, and longevity across generations. Dr Castro will present the work she conducted to help fill, partially, some of these gaps of knowledge. She will also present the research she has been involved in that provides updated information on the healthiness of the NZ food environments, working alongside researchers (and postgraduate students) who are part of the INFORMAS NZ.

Travel Grant funding: Maurice Paykel and Phyllis Trust (3730705).



International Visiting Researcher Kelly Garton
University of Auckland
Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics

Marketing, school food, and the emerging evidence base on ultra-processed foods in NZ

About the Presenter

Dr Kelly Garton is a Research Fellow in the School of Population Health at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her research aims to address the problem of policy inertia (i.e. inaction) in the regulation of food environments to be healthier and more sustainable. She is particularly interested in factors related to the domestic and international political economy, including international trade and investment agreements. Dr. Garton also conducts research monitoring the healthiness of food environments in Aotearoa New Zealand, including children's exposure to unhealthy food and beverage marketing, and school food provision.

Overview of the presentation

Dr. Garton will present additional research on the healthiness of NZ food environments, undertaken as part of INFORMAS NZ. This includes monitoring of the digital food marketing environment (on Facebook, Youtube and company websites), and outdoor food advertising in school zones, and evaluative research to support the healthy school lunch programme. She will then present recent and emerging research focusing on ultra-processed foods in New Zealand.

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