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Sensory acceptance of a diet designed to counteract obesity, diabetes and periodontal disease

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A modified Nordic diet, developed by Igelösa Life Science AB, was tested in a clinical pilot study including ten individuals with type 2 diabetes during two weeks. The diet was based on locally produced, traditional ingredients such as intact grains, vegetables, legumes, root vegetables, fish, poultry, fruit and nuts. The intake of sugar, red meat and dairy products was restricted. One of the aims of the study was to study the sensory acceptance of the diet.

The study was designed as a case-series. The diet was provided, ready-made and free of charge, to both the experimental subjects (N=10) and their partners (N=5). Two subjects were excluded due to health implications, not related to the diet. The sensory acceptance was measured through questionnaire data and two focus groups (before and after the 2-week test period, 20 minutes each). Partners were invited to participate in the focus group interviews.

Data from the questionnaire showed a high degree of liking for most meals. The result of the focus groups indicated the importance of the every-day meal as a social activity. They further expressed satisfaction with sensory properties and the perceived health benefits of the Igelösa diet but also some frustration regarding small portions, too little salt and somewhat unfamiliar ingredients.

Sensory acceptance for diets nutritionally designed for weight reduction and/or maintenance is a key factor. Despite the low number of participants, the pilot study indicate that the Igelösa diet is well accepted. An innovation of the study was that both the experimental subjects and their partners received the diet. The participants stated that this was supportive, facilitating adherence and promoting long-term impact on health. Habits, such as poor diet, can only be defeated by a concerted team effort and our work provide a glimpse of the potential benefits of this shared approach.

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