

Attending lunch clubs is associated with greater compliance for Dietary Reference Values (DRVs) among older people in South-West England

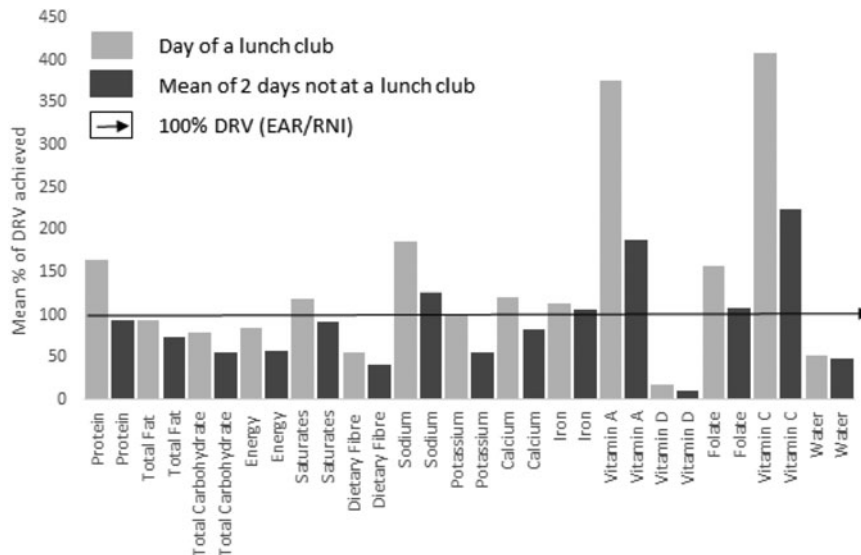
R. Lumley^{1*}, F. Tsofliou^{1*}, J. Lara², Z. Sheppard¹ and C. Clark¹

¹Department of Human Science and Public Health, Bournemouth University, Bournemouth BH1 3LT, UK and

²Department of Applied Sciences, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8ST, UK

Poor health amongst older people in the community is often associated with reduced dietary intake linked to ageing and social isolation⁽¹⁾. Lunch clubs (LCs) have been found to increase dietary intake of older people and tackle poor nutritional health important for healthy ageing provided lunch club (LC) attendance is maintained in the long-term. The aim of this study was to compare the dietary intake of older people on the day of the LC with the dietary intake on days not attending LC.

Five LCs were visited in Dorset, UK. Self-reported food intake was assessed using three 24-hr dietary recalls. A total of 40 participants aged 82 years (SD 8), with a mean BMI of 27 (SD 4) and waist circumference 100 cm (SD 13) were included in the original survey. Here we present preliminary analysis based on 12 individuals chosen at random. The first day assessed was on the day of the LC and included their lunch meal; the other two days included days in which participants did not attend a LC. Participants reported high levels of satisfaction with LC with 98 % 'liking' or 'strongly liking' their LC meals; the majority of participants reported attending LCs for over 1 year (85 %); 30 % of participants attended a LC once in the last week. The percentage of DRV for protein ($p < 0.001$), total carbohydrates ($p = 0.05$), energy ($p < 0.001$), potassium ($p < 0.001$), calcium ($p = 0.01$), vitamin A ($p = 0.02$), folate ($p = 0.01$) and vitamin C ($p = 0.05$) was significantly higher on the LC day compared to the mean dietary intake of the two non-LC days (See figure below). No significant differences were observed for total or saturated fat, sodium, dietary fibre, iron, vitamin D or water.



This study suggests that LCs may be an effective way of achieving dietary targets important to promote healthy ageing. LC attendance may potentially improve the health and well-being of older adults, additionally reducing social isolation.

1. Drewnowski A & Shultz JM (2001) *J Nutr Health Aging* 5, 75–79.

*Joint first authors