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Categorisation of non-core foods and drinks consumed by a clinical sample in an intervention trial

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**Publication Details**
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Abstract
Non-core foods are discouraged in favour of core foods in dietary guidelines. Australian data indicates that consumption of non-core foods and drinks, or ‘extra’ foods, exceeds 20% of energy, the recommended limit for the healthy population. While energy-dense, nutrient poor choices are associated with excessive energy intake and weight, we found that trial participants who reported consuming greater amounts of non-core foods and drinks at baseline, lost more weight at 3 months than those consuming foods closer to guideline recommended foods. However, more detail about the types of non-core foods is required to give effective dietary advice.

Keywords
non, consumed, trial, clinical, categorisation, sample, core, foods, drinks, intervention

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Background
Non-core foods are discouraged in favour of core foods in dietary guidelines. Australian data indicates that consumption of non-core foods and drinks, or 'extra' foods, exceeds 20% of energy, the recommended limit for the healthy population. While energy-dense, nutrient poor choices are associated with excessive energy intake and weight, we found that trial participants who reported consuming greater amounts of non-core foods and drinks at baseline, lost more weight at 3 months than those consuming foods closer to guideline recommended foods. However, more detail about the types of non-core foods is required to give effective dietary advice.

Objective
The aim of this study was to categorise non-core foods and drinks from reported food consumption patterns of participants in a clinical weight loss trial.

Design
All baseline and 3 month diet history data from participants in two clinical trials (n=231) was first categorised into food groups referencing core foods (fruit, vegetables, cereal foods, lean meat or equivalent, low fat dairy foods) and non-core foods. A further 29 categories were created from the non-core group with reference to published research.

Outcomes
At baseline non-core foods and drinks contributed 29% of dietary energy. The median value (2096kJ/day) equated to 3.5 serves/day. At baseline, snack foods (biscuits, chocolate, fried potato chips, cake, ice cream, crisps and lollies), takeaway meals and drinks (soft drink and cordial) were amongst the top ten contributors of energy. Biscuits (sweet and savoury), take away meals, cake and chocolate remained after 3 months of dietary counselling, although the median intake value dropped to 573kJ, equivalent to <1 serve.

Conclusion
In this research context, non-core foods and drinks contributed excess energy in the study population. Targeting non-core foods and drinks may result in greater weight loss, however, this may only be possible if the specific choices of individuals are properly assessed to enable relevant guidance on alternative choices and serve sizes.

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