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Editorial: What, how, and where to eat is more than an individual choice: New ways to achieve healthy eating

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Editorial on the Research Topic

[What, how, and where to eat is more than an individual choice: New ways to achieve healthy eating](#)

The connection between food and the environment has always existed, but this relationship is becoming more evident. While increasing environmental degradation and food waste, and scarcity of natural resources occur, malnutrition affects thousands of individuals worldwide, emphasizing the food inequalities in our most vulnerable populations. Nevertheless, food is a basic human right and must be accessible in all the various principles. These include access to nutritious and safe food, respecting cultural habits, and sustainable production systems. To guarantee this human right and make healthy eating accessible, public policies and other government or private actions should be adopted. One of the ways would be through nutrition-education action as, from the development of a collective awareness of healthy food choices, transformations in our society can be achieved. Hence, this Research Topic focused on promoting a collective awareness of healthy food choices.

Food choices are a highly complex process that reflects ways of producing and consuming food. The dietary patterns of individuals impact the physical, psychological, social, and environmental domains of their quality of life. The social, environmental, and economic domains of sustainable living are also affected. Therefore, dietary choices should be thought of as a collective act, and a healthy diet can only materialize by understanding its scope. There is an increasing interest in sustainable food products, aligned with environmental impacts and effects on health and food consumption. However, there are still gaps between sustainable food consumption and production transparency, lacking information for consumers that may impair sustainable choices. More effective communication strategies may increase consumer understanding and motivation regarding sustainable food production ([Sabio and Spers](#)).

In this sense, dietary guidelines are an important mechanism for disseminating knowledge for changing practices. Their content is a basis for public policies on food, nutrition, health, and agriculture and for nutrition education promoting healthy eating and lifestyles (Rossi et al.). Actions on different aspects of food, especially regarding more vulnerable populations, from the countryside to the table, should be widely discussed, focusing on life protection. Associations and Councils of nutritionists and dietitians can play an essential role in supporting research and discussions on the topic. Additionally, in integrating sustainable food systems ideas and concepts into healthy and sustainable dietary practices (Callaghan et al.).

The nutritional aspect stands out in the sense of providing essential elements for human health. An unhealthy diet with increased intake of sodium, calories and trans fatty acids, particularly from industrially-products, is implicated in the etiology of cardiovascular diseases, which represent the leading cause of mortality worldwide (Al-Jawaldeh et al.). Fortunately, consumers seem willing to consume healthier products (Di Vita et al.). In addition, an increased risk of psychosocial complications is related to an unhealthy diet. For example, skipping breakfast, eating out and consuming unhealthy foods are associated with higher odds of psychosocial and behavioral problems, potentially affecting health and sustainability (López-Gil et al.).

On the other hand, a healthy diet is associated with the prevention and treatment of several diseases. Nutrients and bioactive compounds are associated with protection against cancer (Zhao et al.) and decreasing mortality and risk of non-communicable diseases, mainly from plant-based foods such as vegetables, cereals, legumes, and nuts (Wu et al.). Despite the well-known benefits of fruits and vegetable consumption, their consumption is still under recommendations (Moraes et al.). Although plant-based diets constitute a small part of the population, their demand is growing and influencing the food industry and consumption habits. Therefore, it is important to understand the factors influencing consumers' choices regarding where to eat their meals, mainly in places offering plant-based meals. The reasons affecting the decision to eat in plant-based restaurants are related to health, and beauty, as well as personal

psychological factors, such as guilt, curiosity, and environmental concerns (Park et al.). However, we must be aware of the risk of a nutritional deficit from a plant-based diet without guidance and balance. Therefore, this Research Topic calls attention to rethinking food access, food security, sustainability, and foods on health.

Author contributions

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct, and intellectual contribution to the work and approved it for publication.

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