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| Title | Factors Influencing Adherence to Low Salt and High Nitrate Nutritional Intervention among Malaysian Older People with Elevated Blood Pressure: A Qualitative Approach |
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| Abstract | **INTRODUCTION:**Recent studies have demonstrated that reduced salt intake and increased nitrate-rich vegetables consumption were associated with improved blood pressure and cognitive function. However, little is known about factors that influence adherence to this nutritional intervention in multi-ethnic countries like Malaysia.This qualitative study aimed to explore factors influencing the adherence to this nutritional intervention among older adults from Dementia Prevention and Enhanced Care (DePEC)-Nutrition study. DePEC-Nutrition is a randomised controlled 2×2 factorial trial evaluating the feasibility and acceptability of low salt and high nitrate intervention among older adults with elevated blood pressure, living in suburban Segamat district in Johor, Malaysia. **METHODS:**We conducted individual semi-structured interviews with 74 multi-ethnic participants from the trial, aged between 50 and 75 years, at the end of the 10-month intervention. All interviews were in native languages, transcribed from audio recordings, and then translated into English. Data were managed using NVivo and analysed using the social-ecological model approach.**RESULTS:**Past healthy eating habits and perceived health benefits of nutritional interventions (individual level); and doctor’s advice and family support (interpersonal level) motivated participants to adopt nutritional interventions. Conversely, personal food preference and eating out practice inhibited individuals from adhering to nutritional interventions. Negative practices of family and friends (interpersonal level); gender roles relating to cooking, and cultural relevance of information (community level); and food security challenges due to movement control order during the COVID-19 pandemic (public policy level) barred participants from embracing nutritional interventions. **DISCUSSION:**A complex array of facilitators and barriers across the socio-ecological realm influence older people’s adherence to nutritional interventions. Hence, a multi-faceted approach targeting all stakeholders is required in the planning and implementation of nutritional interventions. These insights can be used to guide the government to better facilitate positive public health nutrition policy change among older adults in low- and middle-income countries context.(Word Count: 298; excluding the subheadings) |

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