PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Research Title: Habitual dietary patterns, nutrient intakes, and selection of Mediterranean-style food items among New Zealanders (NZ MED)

An invitation

You are invited to participate in a research study to explore the usual dietary patterns and food preferences amongst New Zealand adults. Our names are Dr Troy Merry, Dr Amy Lovell, Dr Andrea Braakhuis, Dr Rajshri Roy, and Professor Clare Wall. We are researchers based at the University of Auckland’s Department of Nutrition and have designed this study.

This Information Sheet and Consent Form tells you about the study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you would like to take part. Please take the time to read this information sheet carefully. You may wish to talk about this study with other people such as family, whānau, friends, or healthcare providers.

What is the purpose of this study?

Non-communicable diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease (collectively referred to as metabolic disease) are major contributors to poor health in New Zealanders. Environmental factors such as diet, exercise, and socioeconomic status play a central role in determining metabolic disease risk, and when adhered to, dietary and exercise interventions can be effective in the prevention and treatment of metabolic disease.

One of the most effective and sustainable dietary patterns to improve metabolic health is the Mediterranean diet. A Mediterranean diet is typically high in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds, and olive oil, and involves a moderate weekly intake of fish, poultry (chicken), and dairy with limited consumption of lean red meat.

We are interested in finding out how closely the diet of New Zealand adults reflects a Mediterranean-style dietary pattern depending on individual risk of metabolic disease. In addition, we would like to know:

1. What Mediterranean-style foods would New Zealand adults be willing to include in their normal diet.
2. By including these Mediterranean-style foods, how this leads to change in current habitual dietary patterns.

This information will allow us to understand how to design a larger study that will facilitate dietary changes that improve the metabolic health of New Zealand adults.
Who can take part in this study?
To take part in this study you must be between the ages of 18 to 70, currently living in New Zealand, not have any long-term chronic illnesses or medical conditions that may affect the way you eat or choose food, not be pregnant or breast feeding, and are willing to complete the survey that is in English.

What does this study involve?
You will be asked to complete a questionnaire which will ask you about your health status, the types and frequency in which you eat certain foods as well as your preference for certain Mediterranean diet style foods. Since your social and economic demographics and physical activity levels can also affect your risk of developing metabolic disease, you will also be asked questions on these. Completing the questionnaires will take approximately 45 minutes. If you decide to participate in this study, your de-identified answers (i.e. your name is replaced with a unique study code) will be made available to the research team for analysis.

What if I don’t want to participate in this study, or if I want to withdraw later?
Your participation in this study is voluntary (your choice) and you are not required to participate. If you agree to participate, you have the right to withdraw the information you provided at any stage prior to data analysis. Please contact one of the researchers listed below if you would like to withdraw.

We encourage you to discuss this study with your whānau and community when deciding whether you would like to participate or not. You are also encouraged to invite your whānau to participate.

How will my data be stored, used and destroyed?
If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to provide electronic consent. Your answers to the survey will be kept on a password-protected data collection/survey software and files will only be accessible to researchers involved in this study. All data and answers to questions will be stored in de-identified form (i.e. your name is replaced with a unique study code) and you will not be able to be identified in any way. When the study is complete your consent and data will be kept for at least 10 years, after which, they will be destroyed by electronic deletion.

We may publish our findings in a report or journal article. However, all data or contributions will be published in a way that does not identify you as its source. A copy of the research findings will be made available to you, if you wish (you will be given the option to indicate this on the consent form).

Will I benefit from this study?
Taking part in this study will help us determine the relationship between New Zealand adults’ dietary patterns and risk of metabolic disease. Findings from this study will contribute to the development and design of future research to provide a Mediterranean-style dietary intervention to New Zealand adults to improve metabolic health.

Koha
As a recognition of the time given to participate in this study, you will go in the draw to win one of four $500 supermarket vouchers.
Contact details:

Researchers
- Dr Troy Merry, t.merry@auckland.ac.nz
- Dr Amy Lovell, a lovell@auckland.ac.nz
- Dr Rajshri Roy, r.roy@auckland.ac.nz
- Dr Andrea Braakhuis, a.braakhuis@auckland.ac.nz

Academic Head
- Professor Clare Wall c.wall@auckland.ac.nz

AHREC Chair
For concerns of an ethical nature, you can contact the Chair of the Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee at ahrec@auckland.ac.nz or at 373 7599 ext. 83711.

Cultural support
If you require Māori cultural support, talk to your whānau in the first instance. Alternatively, you may contact the administrator for He Kamaka Waiora (Māori Health Team) by telephoning 09 486 8324 ext. 2324.

Ethical Approval
Approved by the Auckland Health Research Ethics Committee. Reference number AH22272, expiry 30th April 2024.