

The perceived impact of the National Health Service on personalised nutrition delivery in the UK

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Personalised nutrition (PN) has the potential to reduce disease risk, and optimise health and performance. Whilst research has shown good acceptance of the concept of PN in the United Kingdom (UK), preferences regarding the delivery of a PN service (e.g. online vs face-to-face) are not fully understood. It is anticipated that the presence of a free at point of delivery healthcare system, the National Health Service (NHS), in the UK may have an impact on end-user preferences for deliveries. To determine this, supplementary analysis of qualitative focus group data relating to PN service delivery collected as part of the Food4Me project in the UK and Ireland (IE) was undertaken. IE data provided comparative analysis of a healthcare system that is not provided free at the point of delivery. A total of eight focus groups were conducted, four at each site (Reading, UK and Dublin, IE), between October and December 2011 using standardised semi-structured discussion protocols. In total 73 participants were recruited. Two focus group discussion guides: 'Consumer Perceptions of PN' and 'PN business models' were used in this research. Data were transcribed verbatim, verified by an independent researcher and analysed using a 'framework approach'. Overall, both countries preferred for PN services to be provided by the government and delivered face-to-face, which was perceived to increase trust, transparency and add value. Both countries associated paying for nutritional advice with increased commitment and motivation to follow guidelines. However despite the perceived benefit of paying, and contrary to IE, UK discussants still expected PN services to be delivered free at the point of delivery by the NHS. Consideration of this unique challenge of free healthcare that is embedded in the NHS culture will be crucial when introducing PN to the UK. This work is supported by the EU funded 7th Framework Food4Me Project. Food4Me is the acronym of the project: 'Personalised nutrition: an integrated analysis of opportunities and challenges' (Contract no. KBBE.2010.2.3-02, Project no. 265494), <http://www.food4me.org>.