**Focus Group script – consumers**

Hello everyone, thank you so much for taking part in our focus groups. My name is Cass and I’m in the last year of my PhD research, and with me today I have my supervisor Dr Elizabeth Neale who is a lecturer and researcher at the University of Wollongong.

This focus group will take around 45 mins to an hour, and we’ll be asking you a range of questions about your thoughts on nuts, the energy content of nuts and food labels for nuts. There will be some questions today which are similar to the ones you answered in the survey, but we’ll be talking through them to get a bit more of an understanding of your thoughts.

Today’s focus group will be recorded so that we don’t miss anything in the discussion, but the recording will only be used for me to be able to analyse what was said. Does anyone prefer not to be recorded?

The findings from these focus groups will be used in my doctoral thesis, will likely be published in a scientific journal article, and may be presented at a conference, but all of the information will be de-identified. No one’s name or personal information will be published/shared. It’s also important to know that there are no right or wrong answers, we are interested in hearing your opinions.

I’m going to take a neutral stance in the discussions we have, just so that I won’t sway anyone’s opinions. I’m not going to agree or disagree with anyone, I really just want to know what everyone thinks. Like I said, there’s no right or wrong answers.

Ok, so those are the formalities ticked off, does anyone have any questions about anything I’ve just explained? [pause] Ok, to start us off for today,

1. When I talk about nuts, what is the first thing that comes to mind?
2. Do you eat nuts? Nut butters? Can you think of other products you eat that contain nuts? (Probe: cereals, sauces, muesli bars, chocolate, ice cream etc.)
3. How healthy do you think nuts/nut butters are? Why/why not? (Probe: nutrients, relationship with heart health, diabetes).
4. Do you know what the current recommendations around nut intake are? [*Then show slide with picture of a handful of* nuts] It’s recommended to have a handful (30 grams) everyday; is this is more/less than what you are currently eating?
5. Why/why don’t you eat nuts often/very often? Is there anything that stops you from eating nuts? (Probe: healthiness, fat/energy content, relationship to weight gain, convenience, told to eat less)
6. What effect do you think nuts have on our body weight, if any? Why/why not? (Probe: for weight gain/loss/nil, differences between nuts/nut butters, fat content)

*Show a slide that has a handful of nuts on it, and the energy content. Doing this so that participants don’t need to try to remember the numbers I’ve told them.*

Food contains energy, and we use the terms “kilojoules” or “calories” to measure how much energy is in a food or drink. For many foods, our body cannot digest all of this energy, meaning we don’t absorb all of it. A handful of nuts, which is about 30 grams, has anywhere from 750 to 900 kilojoules, or 180 to 220 calories.

1. Given we know that we don’t always absorb all of the energy in foods, how much energy do you think is absorbed when we eat nuts? It varies from about 70 to 95% being absorbed, depending on the type of nut. Does this information surprise you?

*Show participants a slide with an example of traditional NIP.*

Here is a nutrition information panel, you’ve probably seen these on foods that you eat. All foods are required to display this panel, and they show the energy and different nutrients in the food.

1. When purchasing nuts or products that include nuts, how often do you look at NIPs, and if so, which parts? Why/why not? (Probe: vs. nut butters, other nut-containing products)

*Show everyone three example products (three separate slides): bag of plain nuts, a jar of nut butter, and a muesli bar/breakfast cereal. On each slide, show i) packaging with traditional NIP, ii) packaging with updated NIP that explains body doesn’t absorb all energy, and iii) packaging that shows updated NIP and has front-of-pack claim.*

Take a look at these 3 examples of mixed nuts. Then ask question 9.

Take a look at these 3 peanut butters. Ask question 9.

Take a look at these 3 muesli bars/breakfast cereal. Question 9.

1. Which product are you most likely to buy? Why/why not? (Probe: least likely to buy?) Would this information affect whether or not you’d choose to eat these foods, or the amount you would eat?

*Show slide of various NIPs (3 examples: one traditional NIP, one NIP showing ME only, and another NIP showing both traditional energy and ME with a footnote explaining the difference), and various front-of-pack claims (3 examples: one saying something like “your body doesn’t absorb all of the energy”, another that says “your body absorbs around 80% of the energy shown on the label” and a final example that might say “your body doesn’t absorb all of the energy” in conjunction with use of downward arrow).*

Now, have a look at these different labels.

1. Which of these do you prefer? Why/why not? (Probe: which is easiest to understand?)

Now if you remember back to when I told you that roughly 70 to 95% of the energy in nuts is actually absorbed by the body…

1. Would you like to see the amount of energy absorbed displayed on: nuts, nut butters, nut-containing products? Why/why not? (Probe: on which foods/products would this information be most useful?)

That was our final question, does anyone have any other comments they’d like to make about nuts, health, energy, or food packaging?

**Focus Group / Interview Questions – stakeholders**

Hello everyone, thank you so much for taking part in our focus groups. My name is Cass and I’m in the last year of my PhD research, and with me today I have my supervisor Dr Elizabeth Neale who is a lecturer and researcher at the University of Wollongong.

This focus group will take around 45 mins to an hour, and we’ll be asking you a range of questions about your thoughts on nuts, the energy content of nuts and food labels for nuts. There will be some questions today which are similar to the ones you answered in the survey, but we’ll be talking through them to get a bit more of an understanding of your thoughts.

Today’s focus group will be recorded so that we don’t miss anything in the discussion, but the recording will only be used for me to be able to analyse what was said. Does anyone prefer not to be recorded?

The findings from these focus groups will be used in my doctoral thesis, will likely be published in a scientific journal article, and may be presented at a conference, but all of the information will be de-identified. No one’s name or personal information will be published/shared. It’s also important to know that there are no right or wrong answers, we are interested in hearing your opinions.

I’m going to take a neutral stance in the discussions we have, just so that I won’t sway anyone’s opinions. I’m not going to agree or disagree with anyone, I really just want to know what everyone thinks. Like I said, there’s no right or wrong answers.

Ok, so those are the formalities ticked off, does anyone have any questions about anything I’ve just explained? [pause] Ok, to start us off for today,

1. What are your own thoughts about nuts? How healthy do you think they are? Why/why not? (Probe: nutrients, relationship with heart health, diabetes)
2. Do you know what the current recommendations around nut intake are? It’s recommended to have a handful (30 grams) everyday; is this realistic for consumers? Why/why not?
3. [Do you currently recommend/how often do you discuss] nuts to clients/with consumers? Why/why not? (Probe: in what situations?)
4. Do you think eating nuts has an effect on body weight? Do you think people who are overweight should avoid nuts? Why/why not?

Are you aware of the terms ‘metabolisable energy’ or ‘available energy’? They both refer to the amount of energy that is available to the body for absorption.

1. Do you know the metabolisable energy of nuts? It varies from about 70 to 95% of energy in nuts is absorbed by the body. Does this information surprise you?
2. Knowing that the metabolisable energy of nuts is lower than what we currently think, do you think it would change [the advice you give consumers regarding nuts/the recommendations made around nuts/the way nuts are promoted to consumers]?

*Show everyone three example products (three separate slides): bag of plain nuts, a jar of nut butter, and a muesli bar/breakfast cereal. On each slide, show i) packaging with traditional NIP, ii) packaging with updated NIP that explains body doesn’t absorb all energy, and iii) packaging that shows updated NIP and has front-of-pack claim.*

Take a look at these 3 examples of mixed nuts. Then ask question 7.

Take a look at these 3 peanut butters. Ask question 7.

Take a look at these 3 muesli bars/breakfast cereals. Question 7.

1. Do you think these changes in food labelling would influence which products consumers choose to purchase/consume, or the amount they consume? Why/why not? (Probe: which products are consumers most likely to choose?)

*Show slide of various NIPs (3 examples: one traditional NIP, one NIP showing ME only, and another NIP showing both traditional energy and ME with a footnote explaining the difference), and various front-of-pack claims (3 examples: one saying something like “your body doesn’t absorb all of the energy”, another that says “your body absorbs around 80% of the energy shown on the label” and a final example that might say “your body doesn’t absorb all of the energy” in conjunction with use of downward arrow).*

Now, have a look at these different labels.

1. Which of these examples do you prefer the best? Do you think any of these effectively show the metabolisable energy of nuts, or do you think something else might work better?
2. Do you think updating food packaging/labelling to reflect the metabolisable energy of nuts is a good idea? Why/why not? (Probe: feasibility, usefulness)
3. Whose responsibility is it to communicate the metabolisable energy of nuts to consumers? (Probe: who e.g. dietitians, industry, regulators etc. and how, i.e. can you think of any ways that *you* can communicate the lower metabolisable energy of nuts to consumers, in your current role?)

That was our final question, does anyone have any other comments they’d like to make about nuts, health, energy or food packaging?