

Perceptions of Food safety are important drivers of food acquisition and consumption in urban Ghana

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What are the aims of the projects?



- To assess current food consumption and dietary practices in African cities.



- To examine factors in urban food environments that drive the consumption of unhealthy food and beverages.



- To identify context-relevant interventions and policy to promote healthier diets.

Research involving individuals, communities, local and national stakeholders- urban Ghana

SCALE

METHODS *(and publications)*

Local
People in their communities

- Photovoice study *(Njeri et al., Pradeilles et al., 2021 under review)*
- Dietary intake and time use study *(Holdsworth et al., Global Food Security, 2020)*

Local
Neighbourhood and communities

- Geographical mapping study *(Green et al., BMJ Open 2020)*
- Community readiness *(Pradeilles et al., BMC Public Health, 2019)*

National

- Systematic review & meta-analysis of dietary behaviours *(Rousham et al., Public Health Nutrition, 2019)*
- Benchmarking food environments with Food-EPI *(Laar et al., Food Policy, 2020; Asiki et al., 2020 Plos One)*

International

- Systematic review of drivers of dietary behaviours *(Osei-Kwasi et al., Public Health Nutrition 2021)*
- African Food Environment Framework *(Osei-Kwasi et al., 2021 final revisions)*
- Realist review of policies *(Booth et al., Int J Health Policy & Management. In press 2021)*

Context-relevant interventions and policies to promote healthier diets

Our research at local level - People in their communities

A photovoice study

What are factors shaping dietary behaviours of people?

Urban Ghana as a case study

What we did... a photovoice study

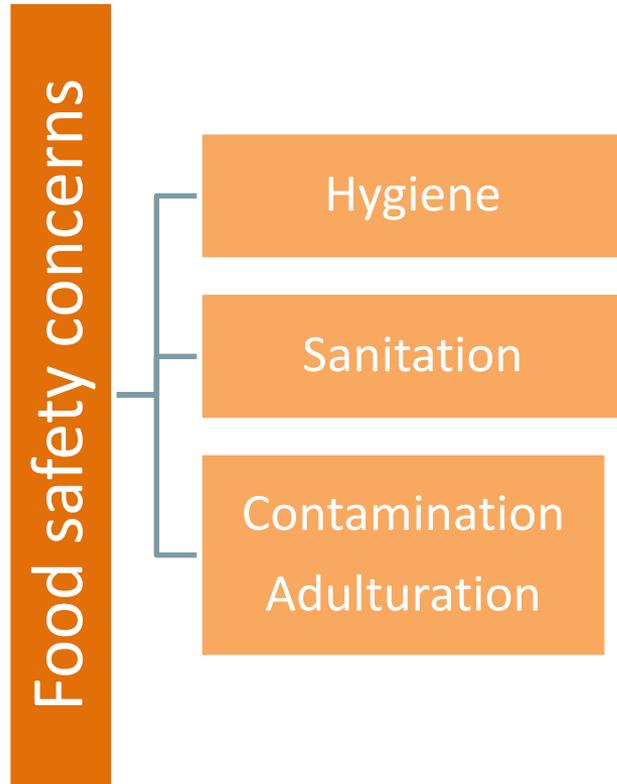
- Qualitative study of factors influencing dietary behaviours utilising a **participatory photography method**.
- Adolescents/adults aged ≥ 13 yrs (**quota sampling – age/SES/BMI**)
n=32 in Ho; n=64 in Accra
- Living in deprived neighbourhoods
- In-depth individual interviews to discuss the stories of the photographs taken
- **Thematic analysis and matrix comparisons- *socio-ecological model***

Data collection

Participants took photographs around 5 main themes:

- ✓ A person that influences your food or drink consumption in your area
- ✓ A place where you eat food and/or drink
- ✓ Something that makes eating healthy difficult for you
- ✓ Something that makes eating healthy easy for you
- ✓ Something that influences what you eat in your area

RESULTS



Food safety is a major concern in neighborhoods



Preference for vendors who:
wear hair net, clean food products before
cooking, use clean water, cover food, clean stall

Removed: participant photograph of a
female street food vendor in Ghana
preparing food

Food hygiene – vendors

“She covers her food with clean materials to prevent flies... when she is not selling she tries to always clean the surrounding and the utensils. Because of that I always like to buy food at her shop so I don’t get stomach problems”

Adult female, Ghana

“...I cannot go and buy sickness... I don’t have enough money and then I will go buy food from a place which is not neat [safe] to eat. If I fall sick, where will I get money to go and treat the illness?”

Adult female, Ghana

“She has soap and water to wash your hands after eating and napkins to clean your hands as well as tissues”

Male adolescent Ghana

Social-economic role of informal food vendors

Preference for vendors who:

- Provide safe, clean food
- are “hospitable”, “friendly” “have a good heart”
- help with credit; good value



*“...she is the most **trusted food vendor** around here... when you come she knows what you want and what is **good for your health...**”*

*“When...you don’t have enough money, [she] could **give to you on credit** to come back and pay later...at times the seller can even give you extra food stuff ...it helps me a lot.”*

Home environment

Removed: participant photograph of a family member (young male) preparing food at home in pots on the ground

The home food environment (food availability, food safety and facilities) was also important, and emerged as integrally linked to the neighbourhood environment

Home environment

Removed: participant photograph of a female preparing food at home in Ghana

*“ but when I am cooking at home, I **will wash my hands, I will wash the vegetables, I will get the hygiene** so that when I am enjoying the food I will enjoy it to the fullest.’
[Female, 19-49 years, low to middle SES, Ghana]*

Removed: participant photograph of a toilet facility near their home in Ghana

“The toilet been situated in front of the house ... there are times ...the odour coming from the toilet facility is very bad we have no choice than to go and eat inside the room” Female adult, Ghana

Environmental sanitation

Removed: participant photograph of an open gutter in the yard in their home

*“It shows a gutter. This place is in the house and it is **dirty**. Whenever I see it I **don’t feel like eating...**”*
[Female adult Ghana]

Environmental sanitation

Removed: participant photograph of a street food vendor in Ghana preparing meat near the roadside

*“Though we love meat, this food corner is not in a hygienic position. The meat is sold **in the open, close to the gutters and prone to dust, sandy wind, flying insects and smoke** from moving vehicles”*

adult male, Ghana

Food adulteration and contamination by street vendors
a common concern

Additives and hormones

Removed: participant photograph of a family member preparing noodles and sausage at home on a gas burner

*“These **instant noodles** that we buy almost every evening, they add allsorts of **artificial spices** to it , the **sausage** and all those things are not good for our body but we cannot afford fish. We have **no choice...**’*

(Ghana adult woman)

Removed: participant photograph of a a food stall in Ghana

'So not having money makes eating healthy food difficult for me.'

Adult female, Ghana



**Financial access influences
food safety risk**

'...if you don't have money, and you go to the roadside ...you can use the 1 cedi to buy something on the roadside, and people do not take care of how they cook their food, when you eat, you can fall sick. ... So money is needed, everywhere.'

Adult female, Ghana

Further research



Explicitly study the linkages between food safety concerns and unhealthy diets that can lead to multiple forms of malnutrition



Is frying used as a way to ensure food safety?
Are processed foods and beverages seen as safer (and healthier) products?



Need research from food vendor perspective- obstacles to implementation