

# Letter to the Editor

## Nutrition between consumer and business

*Dear Editor,*

we read very carefully the analysis of Di Giusto and Tarabella (University of Pisa) about the opinion that over the years, the attention of the scientific world, institutions, public opinion and the media has increased on the interaction between lifestyles and citizens' health<sup>1</sup>. The development of significant progress in the medical-scientific fields, regarding the association between the onset of certain pathologies<sup>2</sup> and the substances present in food, has led consumers to develop greater sensitivity towards the quality of products purchased and consumed. So, consumers research requirements of naturalness and genuineness of the food, therefore preferring all fresh products, typical local, zero kilometer and deriving from organic agriculture<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, consumers find themselves having to deal with lower spending budgets, with increasingly frenetic rhythms of life that translate into the search for purchase opportunities and promotions, in addition to the minor time dedicated to food supply, food preparation and consumption process<sup>4,5</sup>. The result is a shift in consumer preferences towards practical and quick foods to consume<sup>5</sup>, to conserve and which minimize waste, by increasingly buying ready-made meal segments in whole or in part, instead of ingredients that require culinary elaboration<sup>6</sup>. The diet of each of us is, therefore, subordinated to multiple factors and the figure of a consumer emerges whose food choices are increasingly an expression of a personal and subjective dimension<sup>7</sup>. The food industries have developed a greater sensitivity towards problems related to incorrect nutrition, since, in a study, six Italian industries out of the ten sampled, refer explicitly, on their respective web pages, to nutrition by dedicating a specific section. In particular, these food industries use the term 'nutrition' to indicate both the importance of nutrition in leading a healthy life, and the commitment to promoting a balanced diet<sup>8</sup>; this outlines the awareness by the food industries of their central role in influencing the health of consumers through the food supply. It is interesting note that the topic of nutrition, nutrition and diet is treated fairly objectively since most of the information and advice on nutrition comes from scientific journals. Added to this is the active commitment shown by companies in the creation, participation or promotion of projects that favor the adoption of a healthy lifestyle by consumers. With reference to the characteristics of the food offer, half of the sample undertakes to provide the consumer with a detailed knowledge of the product, ingredients used and caloric-nutritional intake deriving from the consumption of the food, thus putting the consumer in a position to make choices balanced food<sup>9-13</sup>. In parallel, 7/10 food industries offer at least one alternative product line to the traditional one capable of responding and meeting the various needs of consumers linked both to the onset of new diseases and health-related problems and to the growing attention to physical fitness and socio-environmental motivations. This results in the interest of the industries in studying and understanding the behaviors and evolution of people's food needs in order to offer products in line with their requests, thus conquering new consumers and new market shares. The reason why 3/10 food industries do not deal with the topic of nutrition could be attributable to the target customers to whom they turn and who, most likely, also represents the typical user of their website, i.e. bar, restaurants, vending machines, international fast food chains and most important operators in catering and retail.

### Conflict of Interest

The Authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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