

# Nutrition and health claims could mislead consumers

August 11 2016, by Suzi Phillips

---

Consumers need to be better protected from misleading nutrition and health claims on food packaging, according to new research.

These claims are displayed to influence consumers' [food](#) choices, but could mislead consumers' perceptions about what is healthy food, says University of Auckland researcher, Dr Stefanie Vandevijvere.

"It needs to be explored how current regulations on [nutrition](#) and health claims in New Zealand could be further strengthened to ensure consumers are protected and not misled," she says.

Dr Vandevijvere is the lead author on a just published study in the *British Journal of Nutrition*, that assessed the extent and nature of nutrition and health claims on the front-of-pack of 'healthy' and 'less-healthy' packaged foods in New Zealand.

Foods from eight categories were selected from the 2014 Nutritrack database.

The internationally standardised International Network for Food and Obesity/Non-Communicable Diseases Research, Monitoring and Action Support (INFORMAS) taxonomy was used to classify claims on packages.

The Nutrient Profiling Scoring Criterion (NPSC) was used to classify products as 'healthy' or 'less healthy'.

In total, 7526 products were included, with 47 percent (n 3557) classified as 'healthy'.

Out of 7058 individual claims, the majority (69 percent) were found on 'healthy' products.

Cereals displayed the greatest proportion of nutrition and health claims (1503 claims on 564 products), of which one-third were displayed on 'less-healthy' cereals.

More than one-third of products displayed at least one nutrition claim and 15 percent featured at least one health claim on the front-of-pack.

Claims were found on one-third of 'less-healthy' products; 26 percent of those products displayed nutrition claims and seven percent featured health claims.

About 45 percent of 'healthy' products displayed nutrition claims and 23 percent featured health claims.

Provided by University of Auckland

Citation: Nutrition and health claims could mislead consumers (2016, August 11) retrieved 3 February 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-08-nutrition-health-consumers.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.