

# Participatory evaluation of educational materials on food, nutrition and cancer prevention in Brazil

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Food, nutrition and physical activity are essential aspects of cancer prevention as demonstrated by evidence in World Cancer Research Fund and American Institute for Cancer Research's expert reports. The challenge is to present this evidence in a contextualised, understandable and culturally sensitive way creating awareness among the population. The Food, Nutrition and Cancer Unit, Brazilian National Cancer Institute (INCA) has been developing and evaluating educational materials to this end. From August 2012 to May 2013 the leaflet “Recycling ideas on food and cancer” was evaluated through Dialogic Focus Groups with health professionals, undergraduate students and a group of patients from a local clinic. Interview guidelines were elaborated based on textual and image elements to analyse the comprehension, relevance and whether the leaflet stimulates action. Each focus group was formed by 6 to 12 members, with a total of 68 participants from Rio de Janeiro and Goiás states. Main suggestions from participants related to understanding cancer risk and protection against cancer associated to food and nutrition. These aspects were represented primarily through the colours of the leaflet: green for recommended and red for non-recommended practices. However, many participants criticised the normative tone of this division. Instead they suggested multi-coloured images to encourage the consumption of recommended foods and grey images for non-recommended foods. Participants advised to remove words such as phytochemicals and food preservation due to difficulty in their comprehension. When food portions were indicated in the text participants opted for cooking measurements to replace grams and millilitres. The least understood recommendations were: alcoholic beverages because their consumption is not recommended, sweeteners and dietary supplements due to confusion caused by the media. This evaluation has allowed not only the improvement of educational materials but also better understanding of how the participants interpret the information and what causes difficulties to its comprehension.

