NUTRITIONAL LABEL COMPREHENSION: A COMPARISON BETWEEN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY (BRAZIL) AND A DEVELOPED COUNTRY (GERMANY)

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The nutritional label is a tool made to help the choice of healthier food. This study attempted to compare the label comprehension of people from Brazil and from Germany, which has one of the highest educational levels in the world. A structured inquiry with closed questions was applied on 110 randomly chosen volunteers, from both countries. The volunteers were natural food shops' costumers, both genres. The comparison was based on the inquiry results. The proportion of costumers that read the nutritional label was bigger in Brazil (85%) when compared to Germany (60%). The attention to specific items was evaluated too. Brazilian attention to trans fat was remarkable as it was considerably higher than in Germany. The Brazilian costumer showed a great attention to fat, sugar and energy. The three items had reached 50% or more of frequent reading in Brazil, while there was no item that reached more than 40% in Germany. A difference was noticed also in the costumer preference for nutritional information quantitative reference. Ten questions about nutrition and health were part of the inquiry applied and the performance of Brazilian volunteers were better in questions about fat, lipidic profile and salt as a source of sodium. The performance of costumers from both countries were similar in other themes. It was observed that, besides educational and economic levels, Germany had not a performance better than Brazil. This could be related to many factors as other strategies to make costumers concerned about the food products they are buying.