

THE ASSESSMENT OF NUTRITIONAL VALUES OF JARRED BABY FOODS SOLD IN SUPERMARKET IN TURKEY ACCORDING TO FOOD LABEL

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Abstract

World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding up to 6 months of life. After this period, the energy and nutrients requirements of the infants are provided by complementary feeding in addition to the breast milk. This study was aimed to evaluate the nutrients profile of the jarred baby food according to Turkish Food Codex Labeling Directive.

The study used 54 jarred baby foods from two hypermarkets with high sale capacities in Ankara/Turkey to analyze price information and their contents of energy and some nutrients based on label information. The products were categorized two groups (number of cereal based products 25; number of non-cereal based products 29). Data analysis was performed in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows.

Most of the products (64.8%) were for babies' ≥ 6 months and 25.9% were for ≥ 4 months babies. The large of them (87%) did not contained added sugar. There was no statistically significant difference between the products in terms of the price/energy/dietary fiber/vitamin C ($p > 0.05$). The protein, total fat and saturated fatty acids of the cereal-based products was higher than the non-cereal based products ($p < 0.05$). The carbohydrates and sugar of the cereal based products were lower ($p < 0.05$). Additionally, 55.6% of jarred baby foods was organic. The prices of the organic products [median: 0.85 euros/100 g] was higher than the conventional products [median: 0.44 euros/100 g] ($p < 0.05$). When the products were evaluated according the health codes declared by the Turkish Food Codex Labeling Directive, the distribution of the products had as follows: 96.3% normal energy, 100% low-fat and low-saturated fat, 95.3% low dietary fiber, 100% low sodium, 14.8% protein source.

These infant foods, which are easy to access, are not as miraculous as expected. The majority of them are grain-based and not protein source. It is necessary to make investigations about the contents of the jarred baby food and to raise the awareness of the consumers especially mothers.

Key words: Jarred baby food, Complementary feeding, Organic baby food, The label of baby food.