



# Food choice drivers at different income levels – a qualitative study from South Africa

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## Introduction

Household income is a strong determinant of food choice<sup>1</sup>. Understanding the food choice drivers for low, middle and high income groups will provide insights to mitigate unhealthy eating practices of the groups.

## Participants & Method

Focus group discussions were held online\* or in-person with urban consumers. The transcripts were coded deductively and inductively<sup>2,3</sup>. Codes related to unhealthy eating were selected and compared.

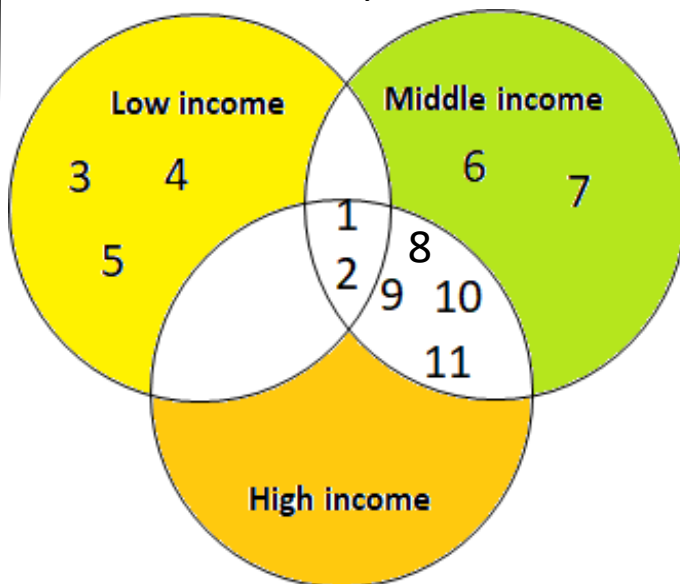
### Income groups

Low	Middle	High*
<€475**	€476 - 2378	>€2378
6 groups n = 36 67% ♀	4 groups n = 22 100% ♀	3 groups n = 17 76% ♀

\*\*Monthly household income

## Results

Drivers of unhealthy food choices:



1. Emotional/ stress eating
2. Difficulty changing eating habits
3. "Being skinny is not ideal"
4. Monotonous diets
5. Cheap high calorie food consumption
6. "Healthy food is not tasty"
7. "Healthy food is not filling"
8. Eating for pleasure
9. Fast food
10. Unhealthy snacking
11. Online food buying

## Conclusions

Some food choice drivers are independent of income level, others tend to be unique to certain income groups. Thus, intervention strategies to improve diets should consider the income-related drivers of food choice.

### References

<sup>1</sup> Mbogori, T., et al. 2020. AIMS Public Health, 7(3): 425.

<sup>2</sup> Boateng, G.O., et al. 2018. Frontiers in Public Health, 6:149.

<sup>3</sup> Srivastava, P. & Hopwood, N. 2009. Intl Jnl of Qualitative Methods, 8(1):76-84.

