

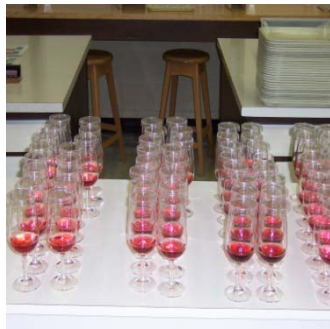
Taste and health

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Requirements for Packaging from an Ageing Consumer's Perspective

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The overall objective of this research was to explore ageing consumers' attitudes towards currently available food packaging in New Zealand. Ninety-nine individuals (over the age of 60) in New Zealand were surveyed to determine packaging attributes of importance when selecting food products. This was followed with a focus group of 13 individuals to discuss improvements to packaging. Frequencies of responses were calculated for the survey data, and cross-tabulations and chi-square tests were used to determine the relationships between variables. Price, safety, size of packaging and ability to recycle were of most importance to these individuals. Problems encountered with food packaging included tight lids, small printing and spillage during opening. Of the types of package closures investigated, opening of packages, rather than resealing of packages proved problematic. Fifty percent or more of respondents indicated that peelable induction seals, lug closures and continuous thread closures were problems that occurred 'very often' or 'frequently'. Sixty-one percent of the participants surveyed had asked for assistance opening some types of packages, and this was particularly prevalent among individuals who had weakness in their arms, hands or wrists. Changes to package closures suggested during the focus groups included increasing the size of twist off caps, larger ring pulls on aluminium cans and including more sliding resealable closures on foil and plastic packaging. Larger printing on labels was also recommended by the participants. Copyright © 2008 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.



Packaging and older adults

Problems

- Tight lids
- Small printing
- Spillage on opening

Solutions

- Larger screw top lids
- Larger ring pulls
- More sliding resealable bags



Current and future studies with older adults

- **Evaluation of soy based bread** – University of Guelph sensory lab & The Village of Tansley Woods, Burlington
- **Omega-3 enriched products** – University of Guelph sensory lab
- **Sensory profiling and acceptability of pureed products**



Questions remaining to be answered....

- Statistically significant decline in gustatory and olfactory functions
- Sensory changes are quality specific
 - What is the practical significance of these changes?
 - How does this relate to altered food intake?
 - What is the nutritional significance?



More questions...

- Texture changes also occur
 - These changes are product specific
 - How important are these changes in comparison to gustatory/olfactory changes?



The need....

- Multidisciplinary research to develop food that is:
 - Nutritionally adequate
 - Acceptable from a sensory perspective

