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Libro Healthy Towns' - A food business protocol for nutrition and allergen declaration

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Abstract
'Libro Healthy Towns' is a joint public health initiative developed under the Healthy Ireland Charter. The initiative ultimately aims to improve the food environment and support informed food choices through technology. Food businesses are required by EU regulation 1169/2011 on the Provision of Food Information to Consumers, to provide allergen information on foods served. Calorie labelling, while not required, has been established as a strong public desire. This study aims to establish a protocol for implementation of allergen and nutrition declaration in food outlets. A catchment area was used to identify food businesses that were categorised by service sector and organisational type. Two businesses from each service sector were contacted to establish their willingness to participate in the study. A template was developed to collect the food information necessary for nutrition and allergen declaration including: menu items, component recipes and sub-recipes, recipe ingredients and quantities, cooking methods, servings per recipe and recipe weight following cooking. Facilitated weighing was used to establish ingredient weights. Ingredient specific food information: food name, brand, ingredient list, supplier and food form, were observed from packaging. Foods suitable for analysis using generic composition data were identified. Feedback from food businesses was recorded during recruitment and observationally, during onboarding. Of the 54 food outlets included within the catchment area: 57% were classified as 'restaurant/takeaway', 28% 'restaurant/cafe', 7% 'pub/restaurant', 7% 'takeaway' and 4% 'hotel'. 57% of businesses were 'multisite', 43% 'independent'. Of the 10 businesses contacted, 2 businesses volunteered to take part. (Site A & B; a restaurant/cafe and restaurant/takeaway, respectively). In total, 72 ingredients were used for recipe analysis in site A, most ($n = 41$) were branded. In total, 75 ingredients were used for recipe analysis in site B, most ($n = 73$) were generic. Reasons for not participating included: fear that declaring nutrition information would negatively impact sales 12.5%, concern regarding digital security of proprietary recipes 12.5%, limited technological skills 12.5%, no reason 25% and unavailability of a decision maker 37.5%. Furthermore, difficulty measuring ingredients, reluctance to waste food and lack of knowledge of brands purchased were identified as barriers to recipe information collection. This study establishes parameters for implementing nutrition and allergen declaration in food outlets. It highlights challenges to providing and collecting food information. Ensuring that provisions are made to address these will be vital to the success of the 'Libro Healthy Towns' public health initiative.

Conflict of Interest
The authors F.Douglas and D.O'Kelly provided supervision from Nutritics, a private commercial company.