



Brief

Food offerings and hand hygiene in connection with meals in the kindergarten based on students' internship assignment

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Most children (over 90 %) aged 1-5-year old in Norway attend kindergarten. That means that the meals they get in kindergarten, often three times a day, play a very important role for establishing healthy habits and reducing social difference. In Norway, it is quite common to serve a bread-based meal for lunch, which consist of a slice of bread together with different kind of toppings, like cheese, ham, or liver paste. In 2018, new guidelines for food and meals in the kindergarten were published, which says that the meals should be varied and in line with dietary advice from Norwegian Directorate of Health, and that vegetables and fruits should be served daily. It also includes guidelines for hand hygiene. Since children in kindergarten are more likely to get infectious diseases, it is important to have a good routine for hand hygiene. The purpose of this study was to gain updated insight into what is served in kindergarten and who is responsible for cooking. In addition, we have examined kindergarten's practice of hand washing before meals.

Data for this study was based on students' practice task when they took a course in nature, health and physical activity in the second year of their preschool teacher education. Students observed if the kindergarten served meals, if so, they registered what was served in an observation sheets for one week, including detailed registration of toppings at bread-based meals. They registered also if children ate meals inside or outside and if they washed their hands before meals. These data were collected during 5 practice periods between spring 2016 and spring 2018 from total 120 students. The data were registered in excel and used in quantitative analyze. Results were shown as tables and bar graphs.

The results show that many kindergartens didn't have one person responsible for cooking, but rather several people made meals in turn. This means that personal knowledge about nutrition is quite important. About half of examined kindergarten served breakfast, but almost all the kindergarten served both lunch and afternoon meals. It was quite common to serve bread-meal three times and warm meal twice a week at lunch, but some kindergarten served warm lunch 5 times a week or just bread-meal 5 times a week. As for bread-meal at lunch, different kind of cheese products, especially sliced cheese, meat products like liver paste were very popular. Otherwise, ham, salami, mackerel in tomato, caviar (cod roe in tube) and brunost (whey cheese) were also often used. Fruits and vegetable were not often served with bread-meal at lunch, but most kindergartens served them at afternoon meals. As for handwashing, it looks like that many kindergartens didn't have a routine for hand wash before meals at breakfast or when they ate meals outside. But since the corona-pandemic hit the world in 2020, we assume that handwashing practice has got better routine now.

Keywords: *food and meals; hand hygiene; internship assignment; quantitative studies*