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Title: Cooking for Health: Delivering Healthy Diets to Low-income Families through Community Kitchens in Peru

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Introduction. NCDs are increasing rapidly among Peru's urban poor. Community Kitchens (Comedores Populares, CPs) are an important channel for the provision of food to families living in poverty in Peru, but its menus hardly ever include fresh vegetables and fruits. This study aimed to implement an intervention to introduce fruits and vegetables into the CPs' menus.

Methods. The intervention was conducted in low-income neighborhoods of Lima, Peru's capital, during 2014. Twelve CPs were assigned to 3 groups: Fruits, Salads or Control, 4 per group. The cooks of all CPs were trained in general nutrition. Then, 4 CPs sold fruits and 4 CPS salads during 9 weeks, supported by a low-cost campaign. The primary outcomes were the CPs' sales of main courses, fruits and salads. An extensive qualitative evaluation was conducted.

Results. During the 9 weeks, a total of 9506 units of fruits (72%) and salads (28%) were sold. On average, almost all cooks bought salads (95%) or fruits daily (97%), while at least half of CPs' members (socias) bought salads (55%) or fruits daily (49%). On average, a cook and a CP member bought, respectively, 5.8 and 2.05 fruits daily ($p < 0.001$). Interestingly, in the CPs offering fruits the average number of main courses sold during the intervention, compared with the previous 4 weeks, increased from 208.1 to 240.7 per day ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusion. The study demonstrated that it is feasibly to sell healthier menus in CPs, increasing the availability and consumption of fruits and fresh vegetables in low-income communities.