

## The barriers and facilitators contributing to water intake in adults

A. Mellett<sup>1</sup>, S. Leddy<sup>1</sup> and A. Mullee<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department Health and Nutritional Sciences, Atlantic Technological University, Ash Lane, Sligo, Ireland.

Water is a vital component in the body and, essential for life <sup>(1)</sup>. Despite water intake recommendations and associated health risks of low intake, it is evident from literature that water intake in adults is low, with many adults failing to adhere to adequate intake recommendations <sup>(2)</sup>. It is therefore vital that proper consideration is given to the amounts of water consumed, to ensure daily water requirements are met to prevent dehydration <sup>(3)</sup>. The aim of this study is to explore the perceived barriers and facilitators to adequate water consumption in adults in the Republic of Ireland. Purposive sampling was used to recruit Irish adults to take part in online focus group discussions with 4–6 participants per group. A topic guide focusing on the factors that aid and inhibit water consumption was developed. Focus groups were conducted until data saturation was reached and no new themes or insights were obtained, and recordings were transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was implied <sup>(4)</sup>, evaluating codes establishing patterns in them to come up with relevant themes. Demographic data was collected using an online questionnaire and analysed using IBM SPSS v26. This study received ethical approval from the School of Science Research Ethics Committee in the Institute of Technology Sligo (Reference: PHN2021001). A total of nine focus group discussions were conducted with healthy men (n = 6) and women (n = 28), aged 18–64, of which nine had a background in nutrition. The main facilitators identified were, motivation for health and good skin, exercise, and activity, established, routine or habits, wearable, and mobile technology, having a reusable water container, hydration health literacy, social and environmental influences, and access to water fountains. The main barriers identified were forgetting or not prioritising when busy or stressed, preference of caffeinated or other drinks, poor access and hygiene of water and bathroom facilities, taste and quality of water, environmental and health concern over single use plastic and unsure of or find recommendations onerous. Evidently, there are numerous perceived barriers and facilitators that influence Irish adults achieving adequate water. Therefore, more research on hydration is required to effectively overcome the barriers and build upon facilitators to water consumption in adults. This in turn may have the ability to improve quality of life, decrease hospitalizations, and minimize the economic cost associated with hydration related illness and death.

### References

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