

# Nutrition Facts Label Use and Adherence to the DASH Dietary Pattern: Results From a National Health and Nutrition Survey

Miri Lutski <sup>a,b,c</sup>; Aliza H. Stark <sup>a</sup>; Rita Dichtiar <sup>b</sup>; Shay Y. Lubel <sup>b</sup>; Efrat Monsnago-Ornan <sup>a</sup>; Tali Sinai <sup>a,b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> School of Nutritional Sciences, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; <sup>b</sup> Israel Center for Disease Control, Israel Ministry of Health; <sup>c</sup> School of Public Health, Tel Aviv University

## Introduction and Aims

Nutrition Facts Labels (NFLs) are standardized labels found on packaged foods in many countries, designed to help consumers make informed dietary choices. It has been suggested that NFL use promotes healthier dietary choices. However, it remains unclear if this results in adherence to higher-quality dietary patterns, such as the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet, which is associated with a lower risk of chronic diseases. This study examined whether Israeli adults who use NFLs are more likely to adhere to the DASH dietary pattern.

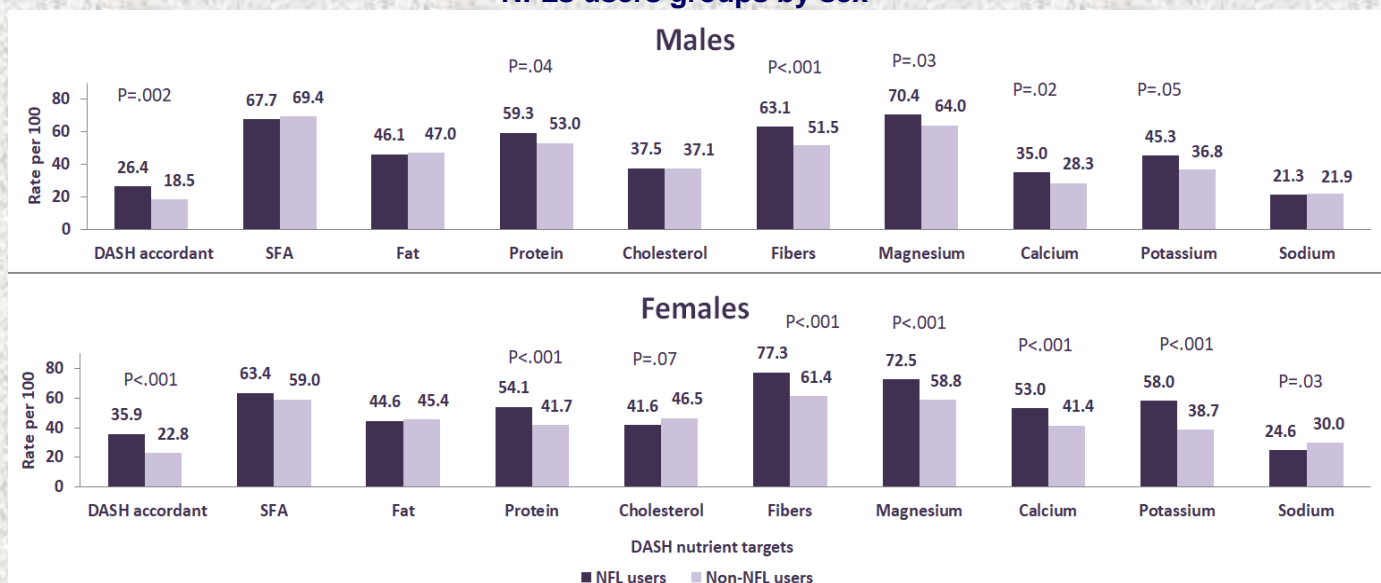
## Methods

Data from the nationally representative, cross-sectional Israel Health and Nutrition Survey for Adults (2014-15) were analysed. Adherence to the DASH diet was assessed using a single 24-hour dietary recall and the DASH score developed by Mellen et al.<sup>1</sup> Multivariable logistic regression estimated odds ratios (ORs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs) for DASH accordant (DASH score  $\geq 4.5$  vs.  $< 4.5$ ) and for each individual nutrient target of the DASH diet.

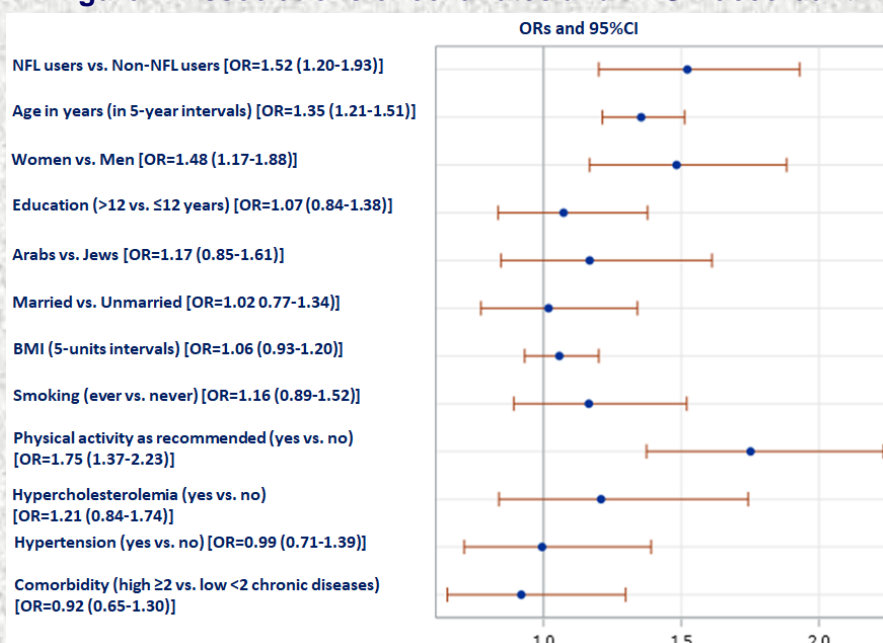
## Results

The dataset included 2,579 participants (median age 40 years, 50.3% women), 36.1% (n=931) of whom were NFL users. Among them, 32.1% were DASH accordant, compared to 20.6% of non-NFL users. NFL users had higher DASH adherence and better nutrient target achievements (Figure 1). After adjusting for confounders, NFL use was associated with a 52% increase in DASH adherence. For specific nutrient targets, NFL users had significantly higher ORs for protein, fiber, magnesium, calcium, and potassium compared to non-NFL users. Age, female sex, and physical activity were also associated with DASH adherence (Figure 2).

**Figure 1. Distribution of DASH accordant and DASH nutrients targets according to the NFLs users groups by sex**



**Figure 2. Associations of covariates and DASH accordant**



## Conclusions

This study shows that NFL use promotes informed food choices aligned with the DASH diet, highlighting its potential to improve dietary quality. Policymakers and health educators can use these insights to enhance public health strategies and food labeling systems. The study was conducted prior to the Israeli Ministry of Health's front-of-package labeling reform, and future research should assess its impact on dietary habits, particularly sodium and saturated fat intake, as well as adherence to the DASH diet.

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