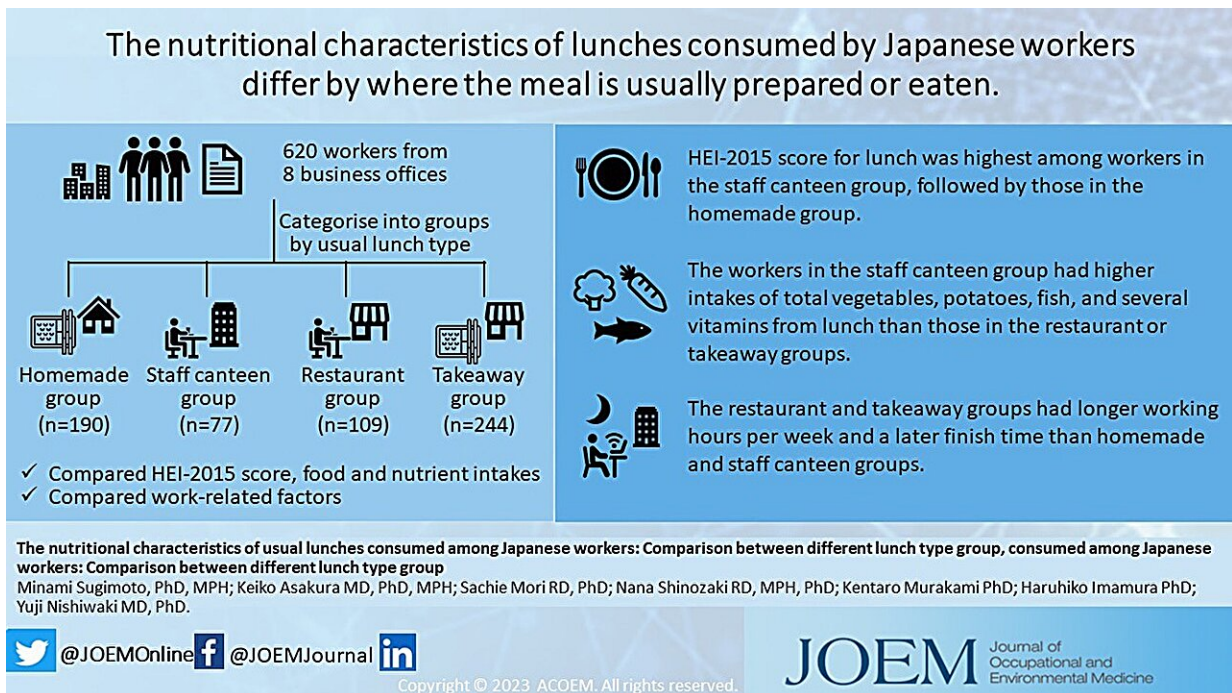


Research sheds light on the healthiest lunch choice at work

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The nutritional characteristics of lunches consumed by Japanese workers differ depending on where the meal is usually prepared or eaten. Credit: Dr. Minami Sugimoto

A survey conducted in Tokyo, Japan, has found that workers having lunch at company cafeteria or bringing homemade lunch are making nutritionally better choices compared to those who utilize takeout options or restaurants.

Dietary habits have an immense influence on one's health in the long run. Thus, where and what to have for lunch is a crucial decision for people at the workplace. However, [research](#) examining the nutritional characteristics of employees' lunches is limited. A [research](#) group, led by Dr. Minami Sugimoto, Prof. Keiko Asakura, and Prof. Yuji Nishiwaki from Toho University Faculty of Medicine, conducted a questionnaire [survey](#) among employees at eight offices in southeast Tokyo. The aim was to investigate the differences in the nutritional characteristics of lunches consumed by working individuals.

The work is published in the *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine*.

The questions included details about who usually prepared lunch, where lunch was eaten, the amount spent on lunch, the time lunch was started, and working patterns. In addition, usual food and nutrient intakes from lunch in a previous month were assessed by a validated diet-history questionnaire for individual participants.

For 620 employees aged 20 to 75, classified into four groups: homemade group (n=190), staff canteen group (n=77), restaurant group (n=109), and takeout group (n=244), the researchers calculated the Healthy Eating Index-2015 score, a score that assesses the quality of nutritional intake. The researchers then compared the Healthy Eating Index-2015 score from lunch intake between groups.

They found that individuals who primarily consume homemade [lunch](#) boxes or utilize the company cafeteria tend to have lunches with relatively higher nutritional quality compared to those who frequently eat out or opt for takeout meals.

"This study is the first to examine the nutritional attributes of lunches among Japanese workers. We hope that our findings promote healthier

[dietary habits](#) in [office workers](#), especially those who find it challenging to prepare homemade lunches," said Dr. Sugimoto, the leading author of the study.

More information: Minami Sugimoto et al, The Nutritional Characteristics of Usual Lunches Consumed Among Japanese Workers, *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine* (2023). [DOI: 10.1097/JOM.0000000000002989](#)

Provided by Toho University

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