

SUPPLEMENTAL DATA

Table S1. List of questions asked during each interview.

Semi structured interview
1. To start up, please describe your role in the fire academy / fire service.
2. Could you give me information about the structure of your fire academy?
3. If not currently with a fire academy, please describe the academy you attended.
Food environment
1. In general, would you describe the food environment in your academy?
2. What food is available at the academy?
3. On average, how many meals do recruits typically take at the academy per week?
How might regional diet variations and food access influence implementation of a new food program in the cafeteria?
4. What type of drinks are available in the fire academies?
5. Are there vending Machines in the academy? If yes, what type of products are available in vending machines?
6. How would you describe is the current food culture of the recruits?
Nutrition training and challenges to adopt a Mediterranean Diet
1. What current nutrition education is taking place within the academy?
2. How important is nutrition for faculty who are training recruits?
3. In your opinion, how important do recruits believe nutrition is to their training? Do you think recruits would be interested in improving their diet?
4. How important is physical fitness to the academy training faculty?
5. How important is physical fitness to the recruits?
6. What are your thoughts about recruit's lifestyle changes while they are in the academy? And after they leave the academy?
Eating and Lifestyle habits:
1. What does the typical diet look like in your fire academy for Recruits?
2. Would getting discounts or coupons help to make better choices?
3. What does the typical diet look like in your fire academy for staff /instructors)
4. How is healthy eating looked upon within the academy (positively/neutral/negatively)?
5. How is unhealthy eating, being obese or out of shape looked upon within the academy (positively/neutral/negatively)?
6. What are the biggest challenges fire academy graduates may face in maintaining Mediterranean nutrition/lifestyle once they transition into a fire department and its existing food culture?
7. What strategies/approaches would best help academy graduates maintain Mediterranean nutrition/lifestyle once they graduate?

Table S2. Focus group outline.

Food environment (~20 minutes)
1. General opinion about the food environment in academies
2. Overcoming barriers for cafeterias to change and sustain healthier options
3. Importance if regional variations
4. Strategies for reducing sugar-sweetened beverages, including vending machine changes if applicable
Nutrition training and challenges to adopt a MD (~20 minutes)
1. Improving current nutrition education within academies?
2. Improving physical fitness in academies
3. Utility of online resources help to improve and maintain healthy diet behaviors
Eating and Lifestyle habits (~20 minutes)
1. What would motivate fire recruits to make healthier choices? What are the best incentives?
2. Possible negative bias, opinions or negative social or cultural perceptions/associations with healthy eating/lifestyles in the academy
3. Strategies to help academy graduates maintain Mediterranean nutrition/lifestyle once they graduate

Table S3. Thematic examples of interviews.

Themes	Examples
Food Environment and Food Culture	<p>“It would probably be somewhat hard to set up a cafeteria. Our space is limited (...)” (#8)</p>
	<p>“So typically they bring their own or they're given a lunch break where they go out and I would say probably typically gravitate to fast food or something just because of the timeframe that they're given to break from training.” (#1)</p>
	<p>“I would put fruit, granola bars, healthy bars and they're getting – I didn't have any soda or any unhealthy snacks. They were tremendous sellers. (...) given the availability, the recruits would respond to healthier choices.” (#7)</p>
	<p>“If we're providing it it's not sugary sodas, it's going to be water.” (#2)</p>
	<p>That really has anything behind that. Your officer's not going to be saying you can't have pizza. (#9)</p>
	<p>“one of our challenges is that the fulltime staff could largely care less about what we were trying to teach new firefighter recruits when it comes to food.” (#4)</p>
Nutrition Education	<p>“For those individuals who are identified as being overweight or obese, there is greater scrutiny put on their diet. Those individuals are required to fill out a food log, which is evaluated by the trainers, fitness people for the fire department. Then they're coached and advised on anything related to their diet that may need to be adjusted.” (#6)</p>
	<p>“I generally do an hour and a half lecture, and probably 20 minutes of that lecture focuses on proper nutritional habits for firefighter training because some of the recommendations I would make for them, I would not necessarily make for the general population.” (#7)</p>
	<p>“... which is called ‘Tools for a Healthy Career,’ where during the day during their lunch we'll make a meal, start making a meal as a big group. Then at the conclusion of their training day we'll finish the meal, we'll eat the meal and then we'll do a class on all elements related to physical fitness, health, and wellness, including nutrition. In the nutritional component we'll talk about the meal that we made, where we made substitutions that are healthier.” (#4)</p>
	<p>“We do have a wellness coordinator who is a dietician that does some education with them on we call it ‘go slow well,’ ...” (#1)</p>
Attitudes and Perceptions toward Making Changes	<p>“You can't be running around, out of shape, short of breath, and physically incapable of doing a job that you're training other people to do. So, ..., fitness is very important.” (#6)</p>
	<p>“I think the online format is challenging to get people engaged ... and with a lot of demands on people's time getting them to connect in the first place is a big hurdle to overcome.” (#5)</p>
	<p>“I think they're willing as long as it's presented to them in the right fashion and that those that are presenting the idea, i.e. the instructors, are living by that example as well.” (#2)</p>
	<p>“If you give somebody an opportunity to try something new where they can just have a bite of it in a classroom setting versus them having to go out and purchase a whole portion of it or make it themselves at home, typically have a better chance of them trying new things.” (#6)</p>
	<p>“There still remains but less so now than ever. I think when I started here again a long time ago now you know people would commonly say to me, ‘We're not having tofu. We'll never have tofu...’ They would raze the living crap out of me.” (#4)</p>
	<p>“Again they've had within education department they've had exposure to it, but I don't believe that there is consistency with adoption of any one particular approach.” (#1)</p>
	<p>“I think they'd be open to it, but I think the problem would be the logistics of how to implement it.” (#3)</p> <p>“if we don't eat right because we're just not educated...my ethnic students thought that eating fried fish was good because it was fish, and fish is good for you.” (#7)</p> <p>“I think for the most part these are normal Americans that are coming into an occupation where they have to be occupational athletes so there's a cultural change there. I think there would be an awful lot of shock value if we were serving humus and tofu every day.” (#4)</p>
Barriers	<p>“And they may go to a firehouse where you know there are unmotivated and lazy firefighters and that doesn't help to set the right example. When they are a rookie and they have less power in their voice or actions they are really required to follow and that's not a great lead to follow.” (#4)</p> <p>“So when they leave the academy and get back to their stations, they're going to be the proverbial low man on the totem pole and are very much going to be influenced by whatever senior firefighters are doing.” (#5)</p>

	<p>“I think what the big missing link in fire academies for not only diet, but also just for general health and well being is the lack of education on the topic.” (#2)</p> <p>“They're new people, they're in very subordinate positions where they really don't have any say or input into what the diet is and the firehouse that they're working in that day.”(#6)</p> <p>“...the difficult part is how you consistently maintain that when they're not there...” (#2)</p> <p>“A lot of the times, members will bring in box of donuts. Sometimes, the neighborhood groups will bring in cookies, especially around during the holiday time.”(#9)</p> <p>“But what we're lacking in a lot of cases is actual in curriculum education on the importance of proper diet, hydration, physical fitness, mental wellness, all that kind of stuff.”(#2)</p> <p>“They didn't understand that once you fry it, we lose the positive qualities of the food. It was only a matter that they needed to understand that. They needed to understand why, the properties of the oil and what happens, the carcinogenic issue.”(#7)</p> <p>“But if they can make some good food and learn to do it here, we can give them some guidance and some classes on cooking.” (#9)</p> <p>“... if you score in this percentile on your fitness test, then you get a \$500.00 bonus. If you score in a higher percentile that's predetermined, then you get \$750.00 bonus...”(#6)</p> <p>“One organization that I used to be involved with would actually give firefighters extra time off...depending on how high they scored on their fitness test ... every year.”(#6)</p> <p>“I think the competitiveness of firefighter would come out. You know if you're tracking fitness levels, weight levels, body mass index, those kinds of things on a regular basis I think those you know might be incentives.”(#3)</p> <p>“Then I think that linked with maybe coupons and education and places to go or menu items that help them maintain a certain body mass or a certain weight level those things mixed I think could work.” (#5)</p> <p>“I would say partly health and partly taste, so about a 50/50 mix.”(#6)</p>
<p>Incentives and Motivating Factors to Overcome Barriers and to Improve Nutrition</p>	<p>“...70 percent of firefighters in this country are all volunteer, so these are folks that are donating a significant portion of their free time outside their full-time jobs to being a firefighter... being a firefighter actively reduces their income in a lot of cases.” (#5)</p> <p>“As long as it's not outrageous, they do make a decent salary while they're here... But the others who don't have any kids yet or don't have a wife or anything like that going on, for them, the price is probably not going to be any kind of factor at all.” (#8)</p> <p>“Uh, education on the benefits.”(#12)</p> <p>“...they're not going to have much say when they get to the fire station. So, what we teach them to do is we encourage them to be part of the meal that's being served because it's such a big social thing in the fire station.”(#7)</p>