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## **Consumer awareness of food fortification in Kenya: The case of vitamin-A-fortified sugar**

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## **Abstract**

Food fortification is considered as an important strategy to address micronutrient malnutrition, which is a key challenge in most developing countries. In Kenya, the National Food Security and Nutrition Policy focus on pilot efforts on food fortification. However, lack of empirical information on consumers' awareness for fortified foods remains the barrier to the uptake of these enriched foods. This study assessed the consumers' awareness and analyzed factors affecting levels of awareness for fortified sugar. Awareness was assessed using descriptive statistics while binary logit model was specified to analyze factors affecting the levels of awareness. The study used primary data from a random sample of 350 consumers in Nairobi County (a completely urban setup), and Kakamega County (a relatively rural setup). The study found that about 55% of the households were aware of fortified sugar and that awareness levels were statistically higher for urban consumers. However, only 26% of the respondents were aware of the importance of vitamin-A in their diets. Results from binary logit regression showed that age of consumers, purchasing from supermarket, reading newspaper, dwelling place (urban or rural) as well as having a child below the age of five years, were the significant factors influencing consumers' awareness of fortified sugar. These findings offer useful insights for the development of preference-based sugar fortification programmes in Kenya. Moreover, the results would guide formulation of policies against micronutrient malnutrition in Kenya and other developing countries, with similar conditions.

*Key words:* Fortification, vitamin-A, consumer awareness, binary logit