

# A STUDY OF AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF NANOTECHNOLOGY IN A UNIVERSITY SAMPLE POPULATION

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**Background:** Nanotechnology is an emerging technology used to manipulate and produce nano-sized structures which are used for a variety of applications including in the food industry.

**Objective:** The purpose of this study is to investigate student awareness and consumers' willingness to purchase foods that are produced using nanotechnology. Consumers should be aware of the risks and benefits associated with the technology and should be able to make informed nutrition decisions.

**Design:** A survey was conducted on 145 university students on the St. Augustine campus in Trinidad. Participants were given general information on nanotechnology and its risks and benefits.

**Results:** Most of the population was aware of nanotechnology and results found that majority of the sample perceived risks as outweighing benefits. Overall, the intent to purchase nanotechnology foods were low and was linked to negative perceived risks and low trust in food laws and food manufacturers.

**Conclusion:** The need for more information was apparent for respondents to make choice as to whether nanotechnology would have a positive or negative effect on the food industry if implemented in Trinidad.