Introduction: In children, food neophobia may affect food choices and limit the variety of the diet as well as affect the sensory acceptance of new foods. Objective: To identify the impact of food neophobia in food habits and preferences of healthy food in school canteens users in the city of Murcia. Materials and Methods: A total of 242 children in the second and third cycle of primary education (8-12 years), were included, stratified by sex and school year. A survey of habits and food preferences, food neophobia and acceptance of foods commonly consumed in the dining room was applied. In addition, a sensory test was conducted and the consumption of salads and fruits in the room was measured by the weighing method. Results: The prevalence of neophobia was 16%, without difference by sex, academic year, time to use service, parental origin and being overweight or underweight. Food neophobia was associated with a detrimental effect on the consumption of vegetables and fruit, the taste for vegetables and lower consumption of cereals and cereal at breakfast and preferably less fruit and vegetables (p<0.05). A higher level of neophobia less acceptance was given to foods like chicken and lentils (p<0.05), fruit, salads and legumes (p<0.001). Food neophobia did not affect the hedonic acceptance of fruit and salads consumed in the cafeteria. Conclusions: It is necessary to integrate this information to stakeholders to ensure an improvement in the consumption of healthy foods.

Keywords
Food neophobia, School canteens, Food acceptance, Food preferences.