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Development of a diet quality index for the Scottish population

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Background

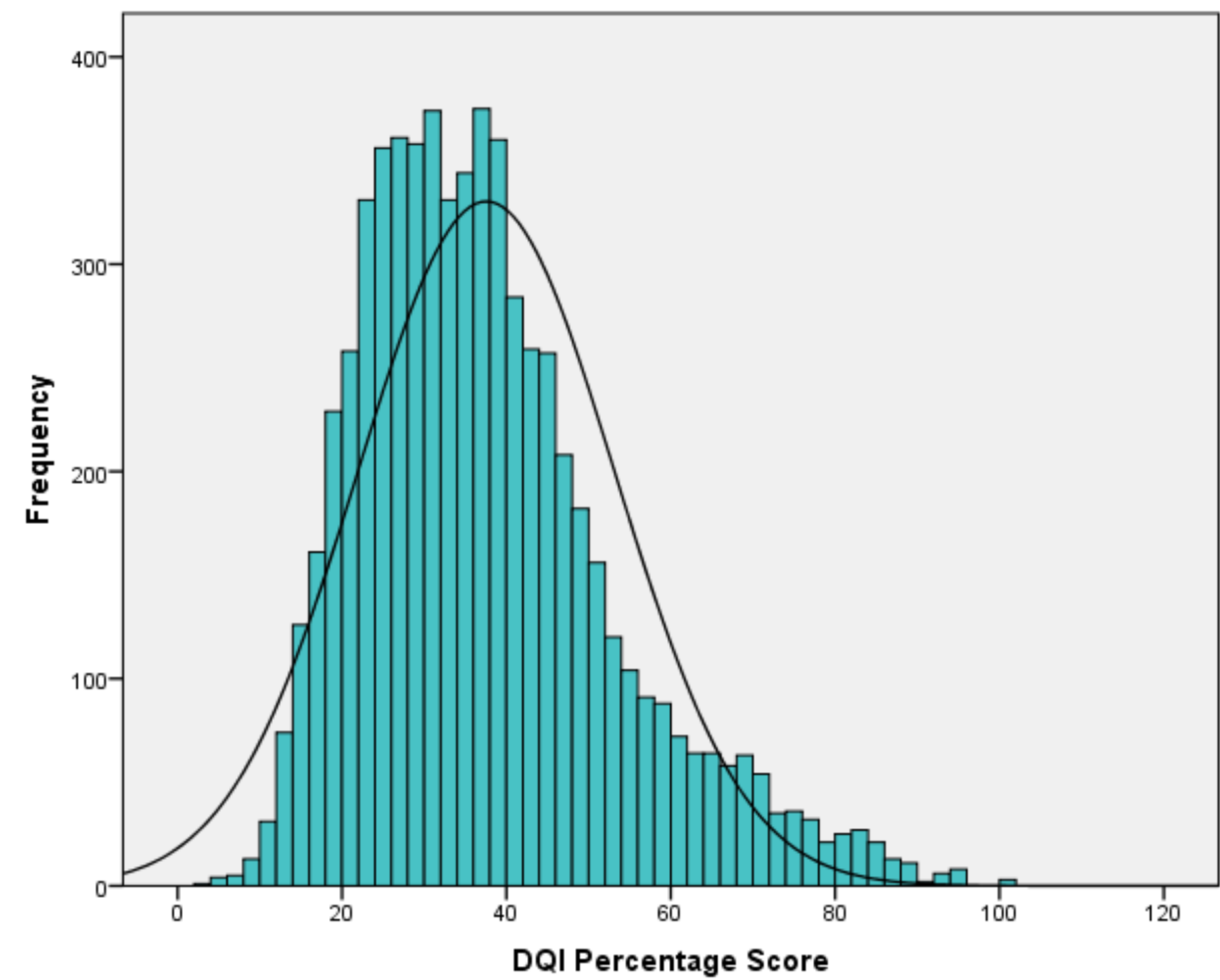
A diet quality index (DQI) is a useful tool that provides an overall rating of an individual’s dietary intake in reference to nutrient and/or dietary recommendations⁽¹⁾ or a diet pattern that is considered to be beneficial to health⁽²⁾. Numerous diet quality indices have been created as summary measures of diet, but to our knowledge, none are available that include all of the Scottish Dietary Goals⁽³⁾. The purpose of this work was to explore the feasibility of developing a DQI to be used with food purchase data to assess the quality of the Scottish Diet.

Methods

A DQI scoring system was devised in collaboration with advisors from Food Standards Scotland. For ease of interpretation, the DQI score was converted to a percentage score. Annual household food purchase data from 2001 to 2012, for Scotland, from the UK Living Costs and Food Survey were analysed to estimate the mean DQI of the Scottish population.

Results

The DQI was distributed across the population, the mean for the combined period of 2001 to 2012 was 36.5%.



Only a small proportion (less than 1%) of the population scored highly indicating adherence to most of the targets. Positive Spearman’s correlations were found between the DQI score, and folate (r=0.448; p<0.001) and vitamin C intakes (r=0.331; P<0.001) (per 2000kcal (8368kJ)) indicating that the DQI was positively associated with other aspects of the diet.

Conclusion

The score provides an indication of the quality of the diet based on current dietary guidelines, which can be assessed for relationships with socioeconomic status, household composition and the environmental impact of dietary choices.

References

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Funded by Food Standards Scotland (S14034 / FS424018). Data from DEFRA, SNS, ONS and UK Data Archive.

