MONTHLY UPDATE

This email update is intended to help people stay up to date with new information on salt reduction initiatives to support WHO Member States achieve a global target of a 30% relative reduction in mean population salt intake by 2025.

Please feel free to send us updates on salt reduction activities in your country that you would like to see included in our forthcoming bulletins.

SALT REDUCTION NEWS

Vanuatu salt monitoring training

The Ministry of Health in Vanuatu with support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the WHO Collaborating Centre on Population Salt Reduction at The George Institute for Global Health conducted a workshop on salt reduction at the end of September. The aim was to train 20 staff members to conduct a survey to assess dietary salt consumption patterns on the island of Efate in Vanuatu. The George Institute provided training alongside The Vanuatu National Statistics Office on conducting household listing; collecting 24-hour and spot urine; obtaining information on diet; attitudes and behaviour relating to salt; carrying out a dietary survey to identify the main sources of salt in the diet; and, conducting a shop survey to gather data on the availability and salt content of products in Efate, Vanuatu. The full survey is currently underway, and is due to be completed in early 2017.

Progress on GACD salt reduction projects

• The Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD) held its 5th Annual Scientific Meeting in early 2017. The meeting focused on the implementation of salt reduction projects that were funded as part of the GACD Hypertension round in 2012. These include:
  1. A school-based education program to reduce salt intake in China;
  2. Developing the evidence base for a national program to reduce salt intake in India;
  3. Salt substitutes to reduce blood pressure in Peru; and

These projects have now either ended or are nearing completion and the results will be published in due course.

ASTHO publishes resources for improving healthy food services

The United States of America’s Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) has been working with the Centre for Disease Control’s Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention to reduce the amount of salt consumed by Americans by engaging state health officials in the development of a national strategy to reduce sodium contents in the food supply. Recently, a number of resources to support state health agencies and private sector partners in creating healthier food environments have been published, including an issue brief which highlights insights and learning from food service management companies (FSMCs) around improving the nutritional quality of foods and beverages that they offer. ASTHO conducted one-on-one interviews and face-to-face meetings with several FSMCs to ask about the different approaches that they use to reduce sodium in their foods. The issue brief and other resources can be accessed here.

AHA reports on attitudes and behaviours related to sodium consumption

The American Heart Association (AHA) has published the results of a consumer survey conducted over the past four years on attitudes and behaviours related to sodium consumption. US national adults aged 18 years and above were sampled from Ipsos i-Track to complete this survey. A number of key findings include:

• 60% of consumers agreed that the nutrition science regarding sodium is strong and accurate, but only 42% thought that the food industry was doing enough to reduce sodium in foods.
• 48% of consumers felt that the government should be involved in setting limits on the amount of sodium added to food by companies and restaurants, and even more people consider that the food industry should be required to monitor and report on the sodium content of their products.
• 48% of consumers thought that the regulation of sodium levels in food is important.

More information can be found here.

Cup Noodles reduces sodium from its instant ramen cups

Cup Noodles, an international brand of instant noodles, has reduced the amount of sodium within some of its products; a total of 550,000 boxes of ramen noodle cups and added ingredients like parsley and lime. Nissin Foods, the parent company, said that these changes were made in response to consumer demand and after extensive research to develop new recipes without affecting taste or raising the price of the products. However, with the new recipe revamp, Cup Noodles Chicken Ramen still contains 45% of the daily recommended sodium intake (from 60% previously). The full news article can be accessed here.

RESEARCH

• A recent study by Cook et al at which looked at the relationship between sodium intake and mortality in the Trials of Hypertension Prevention (TOHP) Phase I and II for over 20 years (median follow-up 13.9 years) revealed a direct linear association between average sodium intake and mortality, with no evidence of a J-shaped or nonlinear relationship. Analysis of the randomised controlled trials showed a 10% lower risk of death among participants in the sodium reduction group, albeit non-significant. For more information please click here.

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You can also follow us on twitter: @JacquiWebster

Dr. Jacqui Webster is supported by a co-funded NHMRC and National Heart Foundation Career Development Fellowship on international strategies to reduce salt 2013-18.

WHO CC SALT is a collaborating centre of the World Health Organization to develop a range of tools and resources to support countries to develop and implement salt reduction strategies.

WHO CC SALT is funded through a mixture of short and longer term contracts and through a mixture of contracts and grants and contract funding from the Australian, Pacific, and the World Health Organization.

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WHO CC SALT in collaboration with the Canadian Stroke Network, produces weekly newsletters featuring summaries of relevant Medline-reviewed articles related to dietary salt. To subscribe, please sign up here.

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Or visit our web site at: WHO CC Population Salt Reduction

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The George Institute for Global Health

Food Policy

WHO Collaborating Centre on Population Salt Reduction

Best wishes,

Jacqui Webster

Global Director: Centre Director

World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Population Salt Reduction

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