

Author: Phillipa Blake

Co Author: Solange Durao (Cochrane South Africa, South African Medical Research Council), Celeste Naude (Centre for Evidence-based Health Care, Stellenbosch University), Lisa Bero (University of Sydney)

Submitter: Solange Durao

Topic: Community health and nutrition programs

Title: Food based Dietary Guidelines: methods used to synthesize evidence and grade recommendations

Presentation Type: Poster

Background: Evidence-based guidelines are informed by systematic reviews and use structured consensus frameworks to rate recommendations. Given methodological advances there is a need to evaluate methods used to develop dietary guidelines for population health.

Objective: To describe the methods used for evidence synthesis and grading of recommendations in food-based dietary guidelines (FBDGs).

Methods: We hand-searched the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) FBDGs database (14 January 2016). The latest versions of FBDGs in any language were included if they were published from 2010 onwards; aligned with the WHO guideline definition; and aimed at the general population. We extracted information on: country; publication date; type of evidence reviewed; methods used to conduct systematic reviews, rate recommendations, and manage conflicts of interest (COI). Data extraction issues were resolved through discussion.

Results: We included 30 of 79 eligible FBDGs (18 English, 12 other languages). Most were based on other countries' guidelines (16/30) and published systematic reviews or reports (13/30). Three guidelines commissioned systematic reviews. Most reported methods used to define evidence review questions (28/30), but few reported methods used to search (5/30), extract data (2/30), evaluate methodological quality (6/30), or synthesize evidence (1/30). Most used consensus to rate recommendations (27/30). Few reported COIs (4/30) or funding sources (9/30).

Conclusion: Our study highlights discrepancies in FBDG development across countries and a dependence on other countries' guidelines, likely due to resource constraints. Governments and research organizations should implement efficient, explicit and

reproducible methods for dietary guideline development that balance rigor and pragmatism.