

Author: Adriana Blanco-Metzler

Co Author: Maria Montero-Campos (INCIENSA), Katrina Heredia-Blonval (Program to Reduce Salt/Sodium Intake in the population of Costa Rica), Branka Legetic (Consultant), Ruben Grajeada (Pan American Health Organization), Mary L'Abbe (University of Toronto)

Topic: The impact of food systems on nutrition, diet and health

Title: Progresses and plans of the Program to Reduce Salt/ Sodium Intake in the Population of Costa Rica

Presentation Type: Workshop

The establishment of the National Plan for Reducing Salt/Sodium Intake in the Costa Rican Population 2011-2021 and the commitments of the National Strategy of Chronic Non Communicable Diseases and Obesity 2013-2021, are being implemented by the Program to Reduce Salt/ Sodium Intake in the Population of Costa Rica. The objective is to describe the progress and plans in reducing sodium intake in Costa Rica. Achievements during the first three years of implementation were: 1) Available sodium in the homes: 4.6 grams/person/day, with an upward trend in the last eight years ($p < 0.0001$); 2) Main sources: 60.2% table salt, 14.3% processed, 13.2% seasonings and 7.2% ready-to-eat foods; 3) Association of socioeconomic income with available sodium and food sources 4) Official sodium reduction targets on key food groups 5) 65% of packaged foods declaring sodium content. In process: 1) Identification of knowledge, attitudes and behaviors towards sodium and population health 2) Determination of trends of sodium content in processed foods through nutritional labeling 3) Verification of declared sodium in labels. Next steps: Project of a Consortium of five Latin American countries to: 1) Conduct health economic impact analyses 2) Develop social marketing plans and strategies 3) Assess the sodium content of artisanal, street and fast foods 4) Develop a knowledge translation strategy and tools. It's expected that the efforts of the National Program and the Consortium, will help Costa Rica meet international goals for sodium reduction and subsequent mortality/morbidity from cardiovascular disease in the Region (IDRC projects # 106888 and 108167).