

Author: Mary R. LAbbe

Co Author: Eduardo Augusto Fernandes Nilson (Coordinador General de Políticas Nacionales en Alimentación y Nutrición Ministerio de Salud del Brasil and TAG Co-Chair), Adriana Blanco-Metzler (Instituto Costarricense de investigación y Enseñanza en Nutrición y Salud (INCIENSA), Costa Rica and TAG member), Mary R. LAbbe (Professor, and Chair Department of Nutritional Sciences, University of Toronto, Chair PAHO/WHO CVD Prevention through dietary salt reduction TAG), Temo Waqanivalu (Team Leader, Population-based Prevention, Surveillance and Population-based Prevention Unit, Prevention of NCD Department, WHO Geneva)

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

Title: Salt Reduction Approaches in the Americas

Presentation Type: Workshop

Type of session: Interactive presentations

Contributors:

Chair/Moderator: Mary L'Abbe, Canada, Chair PAHO/WHO CVD Prevention through Population-wide Dietary Salt/Sodium Reduction TAG

Eduardo Nilson, Brazil

- Experiences in Brazil setting salt reduction targets for processed foods and progress in meeting targets; aligning programs on salt reduction and salt iodization.

Adriana Blanco-Metzler, Costa Rica

- Experiences in Costa Rica implementing a comprehensive program including: population sodium intakes; food sources of sodium; verification of sodium contents on nutrition labels and fast foods; and socio-cultural beliefs, attitudes and practices concerning salt.

Mary L'Abbe

- Overview of the development of PAHO regional sodium targets and results of the 14-country Collaborative Project On Determining the Sodium Content in 12 Priority Food Categories

Temo Waqanivalu, WHO Geneva

- Educational toolkits for reducing sodium intakes to facilitate salt reduction programs globally.

Purpose:

Low- and middle-income countries in the Americas will share experiences and learnings from implementing salt reduction strategies. Technical content: determining major sources of dietary sodium; setting salt reduction targets for key food categories; monitoring progress; measuring consumer knowledge, attitudes and behaviours; and aligning programs on salt reduction and salt iodization. Participants from government, academia, health, food manufacturers and civil society will be engaged through examples and discussions of pitfalls and successes with salt reduction strategies. The WHO Salt Toolkit and the PAHO Salt Smart Americas - a Guide for Country-level Action will be reviewed.

Motivation:

The Political Declaration of UN High Level Meeting on NCDs requested WHO set targets and indicators for 2025. For dietary salt/sodium, it is a 30% relative reduction in mean population intake of salt.

In 2009 PAHO/WHO launched a regional initiative to reduce the overconsumption of salt in the Americas. In higher income countries, the main sources of dietary salt are processed foods. In LMIC, discretionary use of salt at the table and cooking, especially condiments, is a substantive contributor to high salt intakes. Increasingly, inexpensive poor quality processed foods are penetrating LMIC markets, exacerbating health inequity. Twenty countries in the Region now have active salt reduction programs.

This workshop will inform work to reduce dietary salt intake in countries, even where technical and resource capacities may be constrained, as many large food companies have agreed to meet PAHO regional targets. Pilots are also underway on social marketing to change social norms on discretionary use of salt. Dietary salt reduction is also positioned within broader initiatives addressing diet-related risk factors for NCDs, salt iodization programs and determinants of a healthful and secure food supply.

Country experiences will be shared to showcase achievements in the Region and disseminate findings and tools. Additional information on: steps used to develop the PAHO regional targets; results of monitoring sodium levels in 12 priority food categories vs. PAHO regional targets in 14 countries; experiences aligning salt reduction with salt iodization; and unique toolkits, based on technical advice and country experiences will be shared with participants, to facilitate expansion of salt reduction programs globally.

No conflicts

Sponsoring agencies:

PAHO/WHO Regional Office (Dr. Ruben Grajeda)

WHO Geneva, Prevention of NCD Department (Dr Temo Waqanivalu)