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

Title: Sodium content on processed foods in Paraguay

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Introduction In recent decades, consumption of processed foods has increased. The objective of this study was to assess the Na content reported on the labels of processed foods sold in Paraguay.

Methods Cross-sectional study that assessed Na content by 100 g and serving size reporting on processed food labels of products sold in three large national supermarket chains of Asuncion. The information was collected by taking pictures of the front and back of food products by nutritionists trained in photography. The images were ordered by food group and encoded with an identification number. We use the classification of the 12 processed food groups established by the Salt Smart Consortium.

Results Of the 1278 processed foods, 68% were imported. The groups with more food products were appetizers, meat and pasta (16,7%, 16,4% and 15% respectively). The most high Na levels/100g were found in the groups of seasonings, soups and mayonnaise (9,89 g Na/100g, 4,52 g Na/100g and 0,896 g Na/100g respectively). In addition, according to the regional goals on reduction of the sodium content in processed foods, the bread has reached the lower goal of less than 400 mg Na /100g (0,398 g Na/100g). The 97% of the bread is produced in Paraguay.

Conclusions Most of the processed foods had high Na content, except bread. We emphasize the importance of take this information to promote action of the producers to reduce the sodium content of processed foods and to educate the population about sodium content of these foods.