



Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

19TH MEETING

11 October 2006, Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London WC2B 6NH

Final Minutes

Chairman	Professor Alan Jackson
Members	Professor Peter Aggett Professor Sheila Bingham Professor John Cummings Mrs Christine Gratus Professor Tim Key Dr David Mela Dr Ann Prentice Dr Paul Haggarty Professor Ian Macdonald Mrs Stella Walsh Dr Anthony Williams Professor Christine Williams Dr Anita Thomas
Government Observers and other attendees	Mrs Rosemary Hignett (FSA) Dr Julie Norman (FSA) Mrs Maureen Howell (Welsh Assembly)
Secretariat	Dr Sheela Reddy (DH) Dr Alison Tedstone (FSA) Ms Mamta Singh (FSA) Ms Saadia Noorani (FSA) Ms Lynda Harrop (FSA) Dr Elaine Stone (FSA)

Agenda item 1 – Chair's introduction

1. The Chair welcomed members to the nineteenth meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN).
2. Apologies were received from Professors Annie Anderson and Peter Kopelman.

3. Members were invited to declare any changes of interest, of which there were none.

**Agenda Item 2 - Minutes of main Committee meeting (28 June 2006)
(SACN/06/min/03)**

4. Members were invited to comment on the minutes of the meeting on 28 June 2006 (SACN/06/min/03).
5. The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the SACN meeting on 28 June 2006.

Matters Arising Action Check List (SACN/06/25)

6. The Chair reported progress on matters arising from previous meetings that were not on the agenda. Members were invited to comment.

SACN/05/05 – Agriculture and the link with Food and Health

7. Secretariat to progress this paper and to begin trawling for a meeting date in 2007.

Action: Secretariat

SACN/05/40 – Review of data on carbohydrates

8. The Chair provided an update on the status of the possible review, informing the Committee that the Agency and DH would be further considering the scope for this work. A workshop to scope for policy terms of reference is planned for early 2007.

SACN/06/16 – Nutritional health of the population report

9. This paper would be circulated for agreement by correspondence.

*SACN/06/17 – Further analysis on National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS)
19-64 years*

10. This paper would be circulated for agreement by correspondence.

SACN/06/18 – NDNS Synthesis paper

11. This paper would be presented under AOB.

SACN/06/20 – Update on Nutrition and Health Claims legislation

12. An update on the progress of this legislation would be provided at a future meeting.

Action: Secretariat

SACN/06/22 – UK wide consideration of health issues

13. Secretariat agreed to collect views from members

Action: Secretariat

SACN/06/22 – Funding for nutrition related activities

14. The Scottish Executive would provide an update on this at the meeting in February.

Action: Scottish Executive

Agenda item 3 – Folate report (SACN/06/26)

15. The Chair introduced the revised folate report and informed Members that the main issue for discussion was the nature of the evidence suggesting an association between folic acid fortification in the USA and Canada with increased colorectal cancer (CRC) risk.

16. Members were invited to comment on the time trend data on CRC incidence in the USA and Canada which suggested that a possible increase in CRC incidence occurred at around the same time as folic acid fortification.

17. Some of the main points of the discussion were:

- There was variability in the incidence of CRC when the trends were considered over a longer period of time and any possible increase in the incidence of CRC appeared to be largely driven by the pattern of incidence in the age group 75 years and older.
- The timing of the possible increase in CRC incidence differed between men and women in both the USA and in Canada.
- An effect of folic acid could not be ruled out on the basis of the short period of time between the change in exposure and change in disease incidence if the putative effect was related to progression of existing high risk polyps rather than initiation of disease. Other examples of a response over a short period of time would be an increase in breast cancer in response to HRT.
- It was unclear if the possible increase in CRC incidence could be explained by a change in screening practice.

18. Members agreed that although the trend data could not demonstrate causality, the concerns regarding possible CRC risk needed to be made clearer in the report.

19. It was agreed to highlight the uncertainty attached to the tolerable upper level of 1mg/day (UL) set for folic acid which was based on interactions with vitamin B-12 and not directly related to any estimate of possible cancer risk.

20. The majority of members present agreed the overall summary and conclusions, subject to the agreed revisions.

21. It was agreed that at the level chosen mandatory fortification with controls on voluntary fortification would not substantially increase the number of people with high intakes of folic acid and that the level chosen would increase the intakes in low consumers.

22. The majority of members present agreed to recommend mandatory fortification with the following provisos:

- Controls to be placed on voluntary fortification and there should be no further substantial increase in population mean intakes or plasma levels;

- Appropriate systems to be put in place to monitor for any possible adverse effects

23. Members were informed that the revised report would be circulated to them for agreement.

Action: Secretariat

24. Professors Tim Key and Christine Williams left the meeting following the discussion on folic acid.

Agenda item 4 – Update on Vitamin D (SACN/06/27)

25. Dr Sheela Reddy (DH) presented the update paper on vitamin D, which had already been circulated to Members of the subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition (SMCN) for comment. The purpose of the paper is to highlight the prevalence of low vitamin D status throughout the UK population and the re-emergence of rickets in subgroups of the population. In addition, the paper has a focus on pregnant women and children and provides a synopsis of the evidence which relates vitamin D status and chronic disease. It was noted that the paper was a position paper which would be placed on the SACN website.

26. The Secretariat informed the Committee of the research that the FSA is currently undertaking on the interaction between diet and sunlight exposure on vitamin D. Results are expected in 2008. In addition, Cancer Research UK is also embarking on a programme of research in this area.

27. The main comments from Members on the paper are as follows:

- The term ‘rickets’ is too narrow and does not sufficiently capture the issue of the impact of deficiency on bone metabolism.
- Issues relating to adiposity, fat mass and vitamin D required clarification.
- Influence of genetics should be considered.
- A distinction should be made between the different types of supplements.
- Alternatives to supplementation should be considered. The voluntary and mandatory fortification of vitamin D in fat spreads should be covered in the

paper. Data on hypercalcaemia in countries which have adopted fortification should also be considered.

- Information about confounding factors should be included in the chronic disease section.
- The role of Vitamin D in cancer prevention needs to be assessed
- Some groups of the population who have a deficiency of vitamin D require higher levels of vitamin D compared with the recommended nutrient intake (RNI), which is intended for healthy people.
- Conclusions should be strengthened.

28. Members also noted the need for clarification and lack of ambiguity in the recommendations and advice provided to the general public by different parts of Government. It was agreed that the first step in improving the situation is to ensure that current recommendations about vitamin D are being followed.

29. Members were requested to send any additional points to the Secretariat who would redraft the paper and circulate it for agreement. It was agreed that the paper would be placed on the SACN website by the end of the year.

Action: Members and secretariat

Agenda item 5 – Paper on Development of Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs)

30. The Chair asked Mrs Rosemary Hignett (FSA) to present the paper, which provided an outline of how GDAs had been developed and a comparison of GDAs and DRVs. This paper was prepared in response to Member's concerns about confusion around the derivation, attribution and use of GDAs.

31. It was confirmed that the Agency does not have a position on GDAs. The Chair thanked the Agency for this paper, which clarified the situation.

Agenda item 6 – Paper on Selenium and Health (SACN/06/29)

32. The Chair introduced the revised paper on Selenium and Health and asked Members for comments.

33. Members requested that more detail be included from key review papers and on colorectal cancer (CRC).
34. Members suggested several amendments, in particular detail on cancer to be included and a summary section before the conclusion to be added. It was agreed that once the paper had been revised, it would be approved by correspondence.

Action: Secretariat

**Agenda item 7 – Scientific Advisory Committee Best Practice Agreement (BPA)
(SACN/06/30)**

35. The Chair welcomed Dr Julie Norman of the FSA Chief Scientist's team to the meeting.
36. Dr Norman introduced the paper and explained that the Best Practice Agreement (BPA) was a way in which the Agency Board could further understand how Committee's function and assess risks. She acknowledged that the 9 committees, which currently feed into the Agency, work in very different ways and therefore not all aspects of the BPA would be relevant to every committee.
37. Members commented that perhaps it would be more appropriately titled "Good" rather than "Best" Practice Agreement, as this document is not intended to be merely aspirational.
38. In particular, Members commented SACN does not publish plain language summaries of reports. The Chair agreed that this would be useful and one option would be for them to take the form of press releases.
39. The Chair commented that he saw the BPA as an important way in which to translate risk assessment to risk management by providing a method of communicating directly with the Board.

40. All Committees were being given the opportunity to comment on the BPA, which would then be revised accordingly. The Agency Chair would be discussing the BPA with Chairs of the Advisory Committees at the annual dinner in November.

41. The Chair requested members to email any further comments to the Secretariat.

Agenda item 8 – Working group and subgroup updates

Maternal and Child Nutrition (SMCN)

42. The Chair of the subgroup explained that the meeting on 11th September had been convened principally to discuss WHO growth standards and their validity and applicability to the UK. Members of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) had been invited to the meeting and the group is expected to report back by the end of 2006 with a joint statement.

Energy

43. The Committee were informed that the meeting on 27th September had been cancelled but that the meeting scheduled for 5th December was expected to go ahead. Since the last meeting in April, work was being carried out to collect information on doubly labelled water (DLW) experiments, which would inform discussions in December.

Folate

44. Following earlier discussions on the folate and disease prevention report, which is now nearing completion, the Chair thanked the Chair of the folate sub group for all the hard work that had gone into producing this report.

Iron

45. The Chair confirmed that once the folate report had been completed, the iron report would be progressed. As before, data in the report would be checked to

ensure that it is fully up to date. In the meantime, an update would be sent to all members of the iron sub group.

Action: Secretariat

Approaches to the Nutritional Assessment of Novel Foods (ANANF)

46. This group, which met twice in 2004, is due to meet on 3 November 2006. It was considered that the business of this Working Group would be concluded at the forthcoming meeting.

Agenda item 9 – Government update on nutrition related activities

FSA (SACN/06/31)

47. Mrs Rosemary Hignett for FSA highlighted areas in the paper that would be of interest to the Members:

- National Diet and Nutrition Survey Rolling Programme – A contract for the rolling programme is expected to be in place shortly. It is expected that pilot work will commence early in 2007.
- Media activity – The TV advertisements for the phase 2 salt awareness campaign are currently being re-run. These now contain information on sign-post labelling.
- OFCOM consumer research – The OFCOM deliberative research around options for advertising to children had been published earlier in the week. The main conclusions of which were that the majority of parents would like controls using the nutrient profile model, and controls on the promotion to children up to the age of 16. The results of this research are available on the OFCOM website:

http://www.ofcom.org.uk/research/tv/reports/regulating_tvadverts/.

DH (SACN/06/21)

48. Dr Sheela Reddy for DH presented the paper, asking Members to note in particular the recent key activities relating to obesity.

49. Members discussed the initiative to weigh and measure school children and commented on how this information might be used. The way in which to provide feedback on this information to parents has not yet been fully considered; whether to give parents the BMI, actual weight and height, or whether to simply provide them with general information on how to maintain a healthy weight. It was confirmed that DH are currently investigating what information would be most useful to parents.

50. Members asked the Secretariat to clarify a point under the Healthy Start scheme about vouchers for women under 18 years of age.

Action: Secretariat

Devolved Health Departments (SACN/06/22)

Scottish Executive and Northern Ireland

33. Members noted the reports.

Wales

51. Mrs Maureen Howell for the Welsh Assembly presented the paper. It was noted that weighing and measuring of school children is not happening in Wales but that it is currently being considered.

EFSA (SACN/06/23)

52. Members noted the report.

53. The Secretariat mentioned that the Agency had been invited to the EFSA Advisory Committee on Animal Feeds to present the work that has been done on vitamin A. This is with the view to looking at overages and amending the report.

DEFRA (SACN/06/24)

54. Members noted the report.

AOB**Nutrition Professionals Confederation (SACN/06/37)**

55. The Chair introduced this paper and updated the Committee on the activities of the Nutrition Professionals Confederation (NPC). This group had met on two occasions in 2006. It had been set up to address the need for the different professional groupings working in the area of diet, nutrition and activity to have coherence across their activities. There was concern that limited coherence amongst the different groups was constraining progress. The group sought to develop a single point of contact between Government and the relevant health professionals.
56. The paper sets out two important processes that need to be addressed:
- 1) Risk Assessment
 - 2) Professional development
57. Members were informed that the paper had been distributed to members of the group for comments. The British Dietetic Association's response was provided to members. In general, Members were supportive of this initiative, considering it to be an important issue. However, there was concern that the work was already progressing under the SACN name. The Secretariat confirmed that minimal support had been provided by the secretariat, but currently this was not considered an activity of SACN.
58. In addition Members expressed concern over inaccuracies in some sections of the papers. The Chair accepted responsibility for the contents of the NPC paper, and apologised if there were inaccuracies.
59. A letter has been sent to the FSA and the Deputy Chief Medical Officer seeking advice on the extent to which work of this group might fall within the remit of SACN. It had been agreed that at the next meeting of the NPC, a discussion should take place about how to move the work of the NPC forward, against the background of the response from FSA/DH.

NDNS Nutritional wellbeing of the UK population synthesis paper (SACN/06/37)

60. This paper had been revised in light of Member's comments at the SACN meeting in June. Further revisions were suggested, in particular the need to outline the purpose of the paper by means of an introduction. It was also highlighted that the NDNS paper incorrectly referred to the salt 6g as 'salt target' should be changed to average.

61. The Secretariat agreed to circulate a revised version, along with the other two NDNS papers. All three sections would be agreed by correspondence and published as one document.

Action: Secretariat

Horizon Scanning meeting 2007

62. Members were informed that the Horizon Scanning meeting would be held at the Møller Centre in Cambridge on 22nd and 23rd February 2007. The Secretariat would circulate details of the meeting and trawl for items for the agenda over the next few months. Members were invited by the Chair to email the Secretariat with suggestions for agenda items.

Action: Secretariat

Website update

63. Members were informed that a 'position statements' section had been added to the website as a temporary measure pending revision and updating of the website. The OFCOM consultation response has been posted here.

Member's appraisals

64. Members have now received their appraisals and were informed that the actions arising from the appraisals had been noted by the Secretariat and would be addressed in due course.

Action: Secretariat

65. Members were reminded that the next meeting would take place on 7th February 2007 at Aviation House.

66. The Chair thanked Members for their attendance and closed the meeting.