

Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

8th MEETING OF THE SUBGROUP ON MATERNAL AND CHILD NUTRITION

14 September 2007, Department of Health,
Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road, SE1 8UG

FINAL MINUTES

Attendees:

Dr Anthony Williams (Chair)
Professor Alan Jackson
Mrs Stella Walsh
Dr Robert Fraser
Dr Ann Prentice
Professor Timothy Key [From Agenda item 4]

Secretariat:

Dr Sheela Reddy (DH)
Dr Peter Sanderson
Rachel Coomber (DH)
Saadia Noorani (FSA)

Observers:

Susan Sky (Welsh Assembly)
Christine McGuire (DH)

Chair's Introduction

1. The Chair welcomed Members to the eighth meeting of the Subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition, and welcomed Susan Sky, who attended representing Maureen Howell as observer from the Welsh Assembly.

Apologies for absence

2. Apologies were received from Professor Peter Aggett, Professor Annie Anderson, Dr Naresh Chada (NI) and Fiona Bisset (Scottish Executive)

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Minutes of last meeting

3. Members were invited to comment on the minutes of the meeting on 23 May 2007 (SMCN/07/min01). Minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

Matters arising

4. The Chair reported progress on matters arising from the previous meeting.
5. Members requested confirmation that the Secretariat had liaised with DH and RCPCH press offices regarding SACN's position statement, *Update on Vitamin D*. Sheela Reddy informed Members that the report would be incorporated into journals and other publications that reach health professionals. DH is also planning to hold an infant feeding conference next year, where the importance of vitamin D would be highlighted.

Action: Secretariat will keep Members updated on communications of the vitamin D report as and when they occur.

6. At the previous meeting, Members had sought clarification about SACN's involvement in the review of the Nutrient Profiling Model and to be updated on the process of the review. Members were informed that in June 2007, stakeholders were invited to a meeting hosted by the Food Standards Agency (FSA), where agreement was reached on the review and remit process. An Independent Review Panel will carry out the work and this will be chaired by Professor Michael Kelly. Panel membership has also been agreed by stakeholders and will include representation from SACN. The Panel will meet for the first time in September and then with stakeholders in October where interested parties, including SACN, will be given the opportunity to raise issues directly with the Review Panel.

7. Members were informed that a response to the *Health is Global: Proposals for a UK Government-wide strategy* consultation had been sent

to CMO in June, incorporating the Committee's views on the consultation document. A response to the *EC Directive on Cereal-based foods and baby foods for infants and young children* consultation had also been sent to FSA in June, incorporating the Committee's views. Members asked whether these responses had been circulated to the Committee and the Secretariat agreed to check and re-circulate these responses.

Action: Secretariat will circulate to members SMCN responses to the *Health is Global* and the *EC Directive on cereal-based foods and baby foods for infants and young children* consultations that were sent on behalf of the Committee following the last meeting in May.

8. Members were informed that a representative from the Department for International Development (DFID) had been invited to the next SACN Main meeting in October, to provide an update on nutrition activities within DFID.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – The influence of maternal, fetal and child nutrition on the development of disease in later life (SMCN/07/06)

9. The Chair introduced the paper and informed Members that the draft report: *The influence of maternal, fetal and child nutrition on the development of disease in later life* had been revised in the light of comments at a previous sub-group meeting. The purpose of the revised section was clarified and changes that had been made highlighted.
10. Members were asked to discuss and comment on the revised chapter. There was a detailed discussion on the chapter and the main drafting points were as follows:
 - The language needs to be more consistent, for example in the use of terms such as “nutritional status” and “undernutrition”.

- It is important to distinguish between the use of birth size as both a predictor and an outcome measure. There is danger of implying causality when no causality exists.
- The concept of *metabolic phenotype* needs to be clarified. Differences in body structure have been used as surrogates for functional differences, but function was not measured – the language of the report needs to reflect the limitations.
- The chapter largely focuses on small birth size and there should be more reference to larger birth size.
- The section on dietary intakes and nutritional status section should comprise a new chapter, and this should include details of adolescent pregnancy in which the mother competes with the fetus to meet her own demands for growth.
- Need to emphasise the relatively few studies that look in depth at the relationship between BMI and body composition.
- Need to make a distinction between adult and childhood obesity.
- Need to mention the impact of smoking and alcohol on birth weight in the report.
- Need to incorporate the recent SACN paper on the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) and the Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey (LIDNS) data.
- Headings and subheadings need to define more clearly the content of the report.
- A glossary of terms was suggested.

11. Members agreed to send any additional comments on the chapter to the Secretariat. It was also agreed that draft conclusions for the report should be included with the revised chapter, for discussion at the next sub-group meeting.

Action: Members should forward any additional comments on the revised chapter to the Secretariat. Secretariat will redraft the chapter, incorporating comments from Members and highlighting amended sections. Draft conclusions will also be drafted for the next subgroup meeting in January 2008. Aim to discuss the revised

chapter and draft conclusions at the next SMCN meeting in January 2008 and to present the report as a whole at the main SACN meeting in June next year.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Draft Regulations Consultation (SMCN/07/07)

12. Dr Reddy introduced the paper, informing Members that the European Commission had released new Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations at the end of last year. Members were informed that the FSA is currently consulting on draft regulations that will revoke and replace, in England, the existing Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations 2005.

13. Members were invited to comment and identify any potential amendments to the Regulations. Comments were as follows:
 - The Regulations do not give effect to the ‘International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes’ in its entirety (hereinafter termed “the Code”) because they are inadequate in scope. They refer only to two ‘breast milk substitutes’ as this term is defined by the Code: infant formula and follow on formula. Other products marketed to infants (for example bottled water and drinks) are not included in the Regulations.
 - The Regulations should ensure that infant formula and follow-on formula are clearly distinguishable to consumers who are currently confused by similarity of labelling and package design.
 - The case for allowing the “advertising” of follow-on formula was questioned. There is no scientific evidence demonstrating nutritional advantage of this product over infant formula and these products are marketed to replace breast milk as the liquid portion of the weaning diet during the second half of infancy. Thus they are breast milk substitutes as defined by the Code (which sets no upper infant age limit on this term). The Committee concluded that infant formula and

follow-on formula should be subjected to the same marketing restrictions.

- Free samples do not appear to be adequately proscribed by the Regulations
- The case for labelling infant formula or follow on formula with health or nutrition claims was discussed. It was concluded that if an ingredient is unequivocally beneficial as demonstrated by independent review of scientific data it would seem unethical to withhold it for commercial reasons. Rather it should be made a required ingredient of infant formula in order to reduce existing risks associated with artificial feeding. To do otherwise would not be in the best interests of children, and fails to recognise the crucial distinction between these products – which provide the sole source of nutrition at a vulnerable stage of development - and other foods.
- The term ‘advertising’ is too narrow and must include promotion and other marketing communications

Action: Secretariat to draft a response to the consultation on the *Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations 2007*, incorporating comments from Members. Secretariat to send this to the Chair for approval and then send the final response to FSA.

14. Dr Williams, Chair of SMCN declared an interest as voluntary, unpaid, adviser to a number of charities and non-governmental organisations advocating for improved infant feeding practices.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Infant Feeding Survey 2005 Synthesis Paper (SMCN/07/08)

15. At the previous meeting, Members requested a synthesis paper of the Infant Feeding Survey 2005 to be drafted, identifying some of the challenges faced with regard to infant feeding and paying attention in particular, to key areas that need to be addressed by UK Government. Rachel Coomber introduced the report and the Chair invited Members to discuss and comment on the draft synthesis.

16. Members welcomed the report as a whole, highlighting the following points:

- A need to refer to the “health risks associated with *not* breastfeeding” throughout the report, rather than the “health benefits of breastfeeding”
- A need to clarify where relevant the distinction between infant and follow-on formulas
- Section 3, *UK Infant Feeding Strategy*, should include infant feeding initiatives in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Cross reference appropriate sections of the Infant Feeding Survey 2005 report throughout the text
- Include a Preface to the report highlighting the importance of the issues covered in the synthesis
- Include a short executive summary at the beginning of the report highlighting recommendations to improve infant feeding practices and the implementation of policy.
- Paragraph 23 - rephrase first sentence in paragraph regarding standardised figures for breastfeeding initiation to strengthen its meaning and significance
- Paragraph 79 - amend last sentence in paragraph to read ‘...*but there is no nutritional justification for this change*’.

Recommendations

Implications for policy and practice

- Paragraph 100 - replace ‘*early in pregnancy*’ with ‘*during pregnancy*’
- Paragraph 103 – split paragraph to distinguish between support provided in hospital environments and community environments
- Paragraph 104 - mention the NICE Guidance on postnatal care in these recommendations
- Insert paragraph to emphasise the need for adequate training in the practical management of breastfeeding support and the maintenance of this training.
- Emphasise the importance of ensuring there are sufficient numbers of trained individuals to provide practical breastfeeding support

- Paragraph 105 – amend last sentence to read ‘...to restrict *all other forms of marketing communication*’
- Paragraph 106 – amend last sentence to read ‘...as well as advice on *the appropriate selection of different formulas available*’
- Expand on Healthy Start in paragraph 108
- Emphasise the reported delay in introduction of solids and the need to continue promoting this advice

Future surveys

- Suggest incorporating information on the type of solid foods first given to infants and the means of feeding
- Suggest incorporating information on infant feeding facilities available in work places and public places

17. With acknowledgement of the reported success in delaying introduction of solids, highlighted in the survey, Members also noted the importance of considering the labelling of solid foods from 6 months onwards.
18. Susan Sky informed Members that the Welsh Assembly were planning on producing a document similar to this and sought clarification that this would be accessible. The Chair confirmed that the report, once signed off by SACN, would be in the public domain and accessible for Welsh Departments or others either to publicise as a SACN report, or to use in the development of a separate document.
19. Members emphasised the need to raise awareness of the fundamental importance of this area of public health nutrition and discussed how the report should be appropriately disseminated. Dr Reddy confirmed that all newly published SACN reports were disseminated to departments within the Department of Health. Members were informed that DH will be issuing guidance document/materials on the new breastfeeding continuation indicator to the health professionals and the report can be included as a part of this package. Members wished to know whether the report would

be made available as a hard copy and requested the Secretariat considered publishing hard copies once finalised.

Action: Secretariat will redraft the paper taking into account comments and suggested changes. Draft report will be circulated to SACN members at the main meeting in October, for their agreement. Secretariat will consider publishing hard copies.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Nutrition Standards in Schools (SMCN/07/09)

20. The Chair reminded Members that at the last meeting, due to concern that levels of provision stipulated in existing nutrition standards had been lowered, a paper comparing nutrition standards for schools in the UK was requested. The Chair introduced the paper, highlighting the small variation in nutrition standards between the four countries, and invited Members to discuss and comment.

21. Members asked the Secretariat to clarify whose responsibility the standards actually were. It was agreed that responsibility for the risk assessment element of the process was unclear and clarification of SMCN's task in this process will be sought before the Committee can comment further.

Action: Secretariat will request clarification on the role of the Committee in this process.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – Healthy Start Evaluation Scoping Study

22. The Chair welcomed Christine McGuire, from the Department of Health's Policy Research Programme (Research and Development Directorate), to the meeting. The Chair invited Members to introduce themselves.

23. The Chair then invited Christine McGuire to provide an update on where we are with the evaluation so far. Christine McGuire explained that due to

resource constraints at the time of the launch of the policy, an existing contractor (the Public Health Research Consortium) had been asked to produce the scoping study for the evaluation of Healthy Start.

24. Members were informed that the report developed by the Public Health Consortium had been peer reviewed and that comments had been received. The Chair noted that two Members of SMCN had been asked to peer review the document and had also submitted their comments. Christine McGuire explained that all comments had not yet been incorporated into the revised report and the redraft was not yet complete.
25. Dr Reddy informed Members that the scoping study merely set out options for evaluation and further work needed to be done on refining questions for future evaluation. Input from the Committee was welcome on this issue.
26. There was then discussion around what constitutes an evaluation. The Chair asked whether the aim of the evaluation was intended to be observational rather than a comparison between Healthy Start and the former Welfare Food Scheme. Members noted a previous review of the Welfare Food Scheme undertaken by COMA and suggested that this evaluation should take a similar format. It was agreed that ultimately the evaluation should identify the nutritional outcomes of Healthy Start.
27. The wider meaning of the term “evaluation” in connection with nutrition policy was questioned. It was suggested that discussion of methods applicable to evaluation of nutritional policy could be taken to the SACN Horizon Scanning meeting in October.

Action: Secretariat will circulate the Healthy Start Evaluation scoping study report, once all peer review comments have been incorporated. The final report will be placed on the agenda for the next SMCN meeting in January. The Secretariat will take forward evaluation as an agenda topic to the SACN Horizon Scanning meeting in October.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – Updates (SMCN/07/10)**DH Update**

28. Dr Reddy provided an update on the development of Children's Centres. Members were informed that Centres in the 30% most disadvantaged areas were intended to provide a core of services that includes: early years provision, a child minders' network, parenting, education and family support services, training and employment services, health services and access to wider services. Centres in more affluent areas, with good provision of services, are intended to offer more basic services and to signpost parents to existing services in the area. Sheela also informed Members that DH has sent out an information leaflet to all PCTs, *Delivering Health Services through Sure Start Children's Centres*.

Welsh Assembly Update

29. Susan Sky gave an update on activities relating to Maternal and Child Nutrition in Wales, highlighting that the *Appetite for Life* consultation document was currently under discussion and that conferences and workshops were being organised for the end of the year.

AOB**Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommendations on weight gain during pregnancy**

30. The Chair informed Members that at the last SACN Energy meeting, there was some discussion about weight loss in pregnancy and the impact of this on energy requirements for pregnant women. Members of the Subgroup had requested that SMCN discuss the potential adoption of the 1990 IOM recommendations on maternal weight gain.

31. The Chair introduced the paper and invited Members to comment. Members were specifically asked if these recommendations had any relevance to the UK, or if there is any other guidance that should be considered.

32. Members noted that the IOM recommendations were based on assumptions and had no empirical basis. Members agreed that, at this time, there was no definitive answer to the question proposed.

Action: Secretariat will relay views of the Committee on adopting the IOM recommendations in the UK back to the Energy Subgroup.

NICE Antenatal Care (partial update) consultation

33. The Chair informed Members that the clinical practice guideline on antenatal care for use in the NHS in England and Wales is being partially updated by NICE.

34. Members were informed that a link to the consultation document would be circulated for comment, and a compiled response from SMCN would be submitted.

35. Initial comments on the updated guidance included the following:

- The guidance adopts a negative tone by focusing on food not to be eaten during pregnancy
- Recommendations on vitamin D supplementation from SACN and NICE must be consistent
- The recommendation on oily fish needs to be strengthened. It was suggested that this could be turned around to give a more positive rather than negative focus on fish consumption
- There is no indication of folic acid supplementation for women at high risk of first NTD or at risk of recurrence

- There is a need to focus on what action all healthy pregnant women should be taking
- There is no mention of the importance of registration for Healthy Start

Action: Secretariat to circulate the link to the NICE consultation documents for comment. Members are requested to send any further comments to Rachel Coomber by the 19th October, and a response from SMCN to be submitted to NICE.

36. A date for the next SMCN meeting is still to be arranged, and the Secretariat will shortly trawl dates for next SMCN meetings in 2008

37. The Chair thanked Members for their attendance.