

Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

10th MEETING OF THE SUBGROUP ON MATERNAL AND CHILD NUTRITION

17 September 2008, Department of Health,
Skipton House, 80 London Road, London SE1 6LH

DRAFT MINUTES

Attendees:

Dr Anthony Williams (Chair)
Professor Peter Aggett
Mrs Stella Walsh
Dr Ann Prentice
Professor Tim Key

Secretariat:

Dr Sheela Reddy (DH)
Rachel Coomber (DH)
Rachel Elsom (FSA)

Observers:

Susan Sky (Welsh Assembly)
Ruth Campbell (Scottish Government)
Phyll Buchanan (DH)
Lorna Hartwell (DH)

Chair's Introduction

1. The Chair welcomed Members to the tenth meeting of the Subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition. Apologies were received from Professor Alan Jackson, Professor Annie Anderson and Dr Robert Fraser. Apologies were also received from Dr Alison Tedstone (FSA) and Dr Fiona Bisset (Scottish Government). The Chair welcomed Dr Ruth Campbell attending the meeting as observer from the Scottish Government.
2. The Chair also asked Members to declare any conflicts of interest. None was declared.

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Minutes of last meeting

3. Members were invited to comment on the minutes of the meeting on 19 May 2008 (SMCN/08/min01). Members noted a small editorial change – in paragraph 7, wording should be amended to “*St George’s, University of London*”. The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting pending this change.

Matters arising

4. The Chair invited the Secretariat to report progress on matters arising from the previous meeting.

SMCN/07/min02

5. At the previous meeting, the Secretariat agreed to consult the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) and to consider publishing hard copies of the joint SACN/RCPCH report *Application of the WHO Growth Standards in the UK*. Members were informed that the Secretariat was currently liaising with The Stationery Office (TSO) and the (RCPCH) to arrange a joint publication.
6. Members had also asked the Secretariat to enquire about a central government online database for the publication of reports. Members were informed that a full update would be given at the main October SACN meeting.

SMCN/08/03

7. At the previous meeting, Members had also asked if there were plans to issue any guidance with the Health in Pregnancy Grant (HiP), which will be available from April 2009 and for all expectant mothers from the 25th week of pregnancy, on how to spend the money. Members were informed that the Treasury currently have no plans to issue specific guidance with the Grant. Dr Sheela Reddy clarified that although the initial implication was that this was a

nutrition grant, the HiP is intended to provide flexible financial help to support the general health and well-being of women in the later stages of pregnancy and to help them with the wider costs in the run up to the birth. Dr Sheela Reddy also clarified that this is a universal grant and pregnant women of all ages should receive this benefit.

8. Members asked how the HiP will be monitored and commented that an assessment of the scheme's impact on maternal and child health would be desirable. The Secretariat was unaware of any plans to evaluate the scheme and agreed to pass these concerns back to the Treasury.

Action: Secretariat will ask the Treasury if any measures are proposed to evaluate the HiP Grant and will pass on Members' concerns regarding its evaluation.

SMCN/08/04

9. Dr Sheela Reddy explained to Members that the Secretariat had passed on their concerns regarding the protection of PCT funding for Children's Centres to DCSF. In addition, Members were informed that the Department of Health plans to fund PCTs with the lowest breastfeeding rates on a project basis, which will ensure the money is spent on breastfeeding. Each PCT will receive grant of £50,000 – £100,000 over a period of three years and the primary purpose of this will be to initiate the process of implementing the Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI). Dr Sheela Reddy also clarified that the Department would fund UNICEF to increase their capacity to support PCTs.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – The influence of maternal, fetal and child nutrition on the development of disease in later life (SMCN/08/06)

10. The Chair firstly drew attention to tabled abstracts for the unpublished work on teenage pregnancies (Baker *et al.*, 2008), which Members had requested to see at the previous meeting. Members were informed that the Secretariat had contacted Professor Lucilla Poston, the Principal Investigator, and that she had asked that copies of the full report were not circulated until publication. Dr

Sheela Reddy clarified that “Tommy’s” is a registered charity, funding research projects at St Thomas’ in London as well as other places.

11. The Chair highlighted the key research findings as outlined in the abstracts but Members noted that without having sight of the full report, it was hard to comment, for example, on the vitamin D status of these groups, Members would ideally see the methods used for data collection. It was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate the full paper to Members as soon as this is published.

Action: Secretariat will circulate the full report of the research on teenage pregnancies (Baker *et al.*, 2008) once this becomes available.

12. Members also asked if the work by Scholl (*Am J Clin Nutr* 1994;**60**:183-8). was similar to that done by Baker *et al.*, and if the purpose was to make comparisons between studies. It was clarified that the purpose was to determine whether fetal nutrition status is affected by maternal nutritional demands when the mother is still growing herself.
13. The Chair introduced the main paper for Agenda Item 2: *The influence of maternal, fetal and child nutrition on the development of disease in later life*. Members were informed that the Secretariat had continued drafting the report and had incorporated comments from the last meeting in May, at which Members had expressed agreement to the overall revised structure of the report presented to them.
14. The major changes to the working draft were highlighted. Firstly, the *Background* section (Chapter 2) had been extended to include an explanation of fetal and infant development, to provide clarity and to offer a framework for interpretation, as requested at the last meeting. In addition, Chapter 5 *Maternal and Child Nutritional Status in the UK* had been revised in an attempt to link current population maternal and child nutritional status with the preceding content.

15. Members asked for an update on activity since the last meeting and were informed that following an initial redraft incorporating Member's comments from the May meeting, the Chair had met with the Secretariat to discuss the report, following which further revisions were made. The Chair explained that there had been no time to form a drafting group in advance of the current meeting. The Chair also noted that the intention remained to present a near final draft to the main SACN Committee at the meeting in February 2009.

16. The Chair asked Members to note tabled comments from Professor Alan Jackson. Attachments provided by Professor Jackson had not been tabled for the meeting and the Secretariat agreed to forward these attachments to Members.

Action: Secretariat will circulate original email from Professor Jackson with comments and attachments.

17. The Chair invited general comments on the revised draft and a number of drafting points were raised.

18. Members noted that the structure of the report still required some work. The Chair suggested the following alternative structure and this was agreed by Members:

- i) Terms of Reference and Methodology
- ii) Epidemiology
- iii) Underlying mechanisms and explanations
- iv) Implications and relation to maternal and child nutritional status in the UK

19. It was also suggested that the animal studies should come later with the mechanistic explanations.

20. Members recognised that they had previously requested an extension of the background to provide a basis for understanding the subsequent epidemiology

sections and that this might be lost with this new structure. It was suggested that explanatory statements preceding the epidemiology section could overcome this.

21. The Chair introduced the revised Chapter 5 *Maternal and Child Nutritional Status in the UK* reminding Members that this had been revised in an attempt to link maternal and child nutritional status with the epidemiology sections. The Chair invited comments and a number of drafting points were raised.
22. The Chair also listed seventeen key summary points for the report as a whole, which could be used to develop the overall conclusions.
23. It was agreed that the Secretariat would meet with the Chair following this meeting, to discuss further drafting of the report. The Secretariat would then send a revised draft to Members for comment before the next meeting in January 2009. The Secretariat would also approach Members to convene a drafting group to agree the detail of the report. The intention was to then present a final draft to the main SACN Committee in February 2009.

Action: Secretariat will meet with the Chair and continue drafting the report, incorporating comments from Members. A drafting group will also be convened to advise the Secretariat on finer points.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – “Good Night” Milks (SMCN/08/07)

24. The Chair informed Members that infant formula manufacturers Cow & Gate and HiPP Organic have recently introduced “Good Night” milk products marketed to help with settling babies at bedtime. The Chair invited the Secretariat to introduce the paper, which outlined the background and points for discussion.
25. The Chair then invited Members to discuss the questions outlined in the paper, and to consider the place of “Good Night” milk products for infants 6 months

of age and above. Members noted that this had previously been discussed by the RCPCH Standing Committee on Nutrition.

26. There was a detailed discussion about the following questions:

- 1) What is the place of these products in the diet of infants 6 months and over?
- 2) Are there any risks or benefits associated with the use of these products?
- 3) Are Members aware of evidence to substantiate scientifically the claims stated in paragraphs 7 and 8?

27. It was clarified that the German Society of Paediatrics' conclusion that this practice "endangers child health" (alluded to in paragraph 10 of the discussion paper), likely referred to the gluten content of the products that had originally been considered in Germany. It was noted that the composition of HiPP Organic's Good Night Milk, which was also considered by the German Society of Paediatrics, is likely to have been altered following the release of their statement.

28. It was agreed that a statement reflecting the Committee's discussion would be drafted and circulated to Members for agreement..

Action: Secretariat will draft a statement reflecting the Subgroup's discussion and agree this with the Chair. The statement would then be circulated to SMCN members for agreement and then taken to SACN Main Committee in October. Following approval the Secretariat will place the statement on the SACN website as a position statement.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Updates on Activities related to Maternal and Child Nutrition (SMCN/08/08)

DH Update

29. Dr Sheela Reddy introduced the paper and provided an update on current DH activities related to maternal and child nutrition, highlighting the following points:

- The Independent Review Panel, set up to assess whether the new controls on infant formula and follow-on formula are working as expected, have met twice since June. The Panel, chaired by Professor Ann Murcott, has asked DH and the FSA to commission two pieces of research: 1) to obtain a broad, accurate and representative view of the nature of advertising and presentation of infant formula and follow-on formula; and 2) to establish whether carers are clear that follow-on formula advertising and presentation relates to formula for older babies, and whether infants under six months of age are being fed follow-on formula. It was clarified that Professor Peter Aggett was on the Panel as an independent advisor, as opposed to representing SACN.
- The Panel had also held a meeting with stakeholders and in addition, research proposals had been invited and submitted for consideration; the Panel has recently met to discuss and review these proposals. Dr Sheela Reddy noted that the Minister had requested a report by this time next year.
- The RCPCH Growth Standards Project Team has developed prototypes for the new merged UK90-WHO charts and these are currently being consulted on. A stakeholder meeting would be held shortly to discuss the proposed design of the charts.
- It was clarified that divergence from the UK90 charts would now occur at 4 years, as opposed to 2 years as originally recommended by the joint SACN/RCPCH expert growth standards group, and this was for logistical reasons, not scientific.
- A number of focus groups with parents and health professionals have informed a new design for the charts. The instructions accompanying the charts for both health professionals and parents have also been re-written.

30. It was agreed that the Secretariat should update the SACN Committee on the progress of adopting the WHO Standards.

Action: Secretariat will update the SACN Main Committee on the progress of adopting the WHO Growth Standards.

31. Members noted that WHO were also producing centiles for 4–18 years, based on data from the National Centre for Health Statistics (NCHS). Dr Sheela Reddy clarified that these charts were already published and that the charts were based on old data.
32. Dr Sheela Reddy clarified for Members that under the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP), children aged 4-5 years and aged 10–11 years are currently weighed and measured during the school year, but parents are not informed of the results. However, from September 2008, PCTs will be expected to routinely send parents their child's results. Result letters and information leaflets for PCTs have been developed to use with parents.
33. Members asked whether there would be follow up routines and if PCTs would provide counselling and support for parents, following receipt of their child's results. Dr Sheela Reddy explained that result letters would convey their child's measurements and depending on where their child stands, parents would be advised to consult the school nurse or their GP. Parents will also be given information about, and guided to, local services available. It was clarified that this was a surveillance programme.

Scottish Government

34. Dr Ruth Campbell gave an update on activities relating to maternal and child nutrition in Scotland, highlighting the following:
 - The Infant Nutrition Co-ordinator for Scotland has been appointed for 2 years and will lead the development of the infant nutrition strategy in Scotland, providing advice to all those involved in infant nutrition. Part of the remit for this work will be to emphasise the importance of breastfeeding in improving and maintaining health and in establishing

healthy eating patterns in infancy. It was clarified that this remit would also include maternal nutrition.

- *Healthy Eating, Active Living* was published in June 2008 and is a 3 year action plan to improve diet, increase physical activity and tackle obesity. The Scottish Government is providing some funding to look specifically at maternal and child nutrition and the NICE public health guidelines will be the basis for direction for NHS Health Boards to take.
- The Scottish Government has set NHS Boards a new HEAT target on breastfeeding “to increase the proportion of newborn children exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks from 26.6% in 2006/07 to 33.3% by 2010/11”.

Welsh Assembly Update

35. Susan Sky gave an update on activities relating to maternal and child nutrition in Wales, highlighting the following:

- Wales have now issued grant funding to UNICEF to appoint two part time posts to support and encourage Trusts in Wales that do not yet participate in the Baby Friendly Initiative.
- Breastfeeding Support Grants are currently being issued and projects to provide training and other support for mothers across Wales will begin shortly. It was clarified that these Schemes were currently planned for a year but that these will hopefully be sustained.
- The Breastfeeding Data Collection Pilot Scheme is being piloted in Caerphilly Borough with a means to rolling this out across Wales.
- There are plans to distribute the Best Beginnings DVD at the booking clinic, which will give the opportunity, at subsequent meetings, to discuss the content of the DVD with the mother.

AOB

Dietary Surveys of Infants and Young Children

36. The Chair informed Members that the FSA and DH are planning to conduct a dietary survey of infants and young children that will aim to gather detailed information about the diets of a representative sample of infants and young children in the UK. Members were asked to note the Final Specification for this research that had been circulated for information. It was noted that this will be included as part of the survey invitation to tender document.
37. Dr Ann Prentice, Director of the Medical Research Council Human Nutrition Research (MRC-HNR) Cambridge, informed Members that MRC-HNR had expressed an interest in this research. The Chair emphasised that this paper is confidential and should not be circulated further at this point in time.

Future Work Plan

38. The Chair noted that the two major items pending on the Subgroup's future work plan included a review of the risks associated with not breastfeeding, and a review of the scientific evidence around complementary feeding. However, due to limited Secretariat resources, this work will remain on the future work plan until completion of the Subgroup's current working report.

Vitamin D Leaflet

39. Members asked for an update on the progress of the Department of Health's new Vitamin D leaflet for health professionals. Dr Sheela Reddy explained that the leaflet is still in production and should be available by the end of the year.

Next meeting

40. The next Subgroup meeting will be held on 28th January 2009. Additional meetings are also scheduled for 15th May and 11th September 2009.