



Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

24th MEETING

12th June 2008, St Magnus House, 25 Guild Street, Aberdeen, AB11 6NJ

Final Minutes

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| Chairman | Professor Alan Jackson |
| Members | Professor Annie Anderson Dr Paul Haggarty Professor Tim Key Professor Ian Macdonald Dr David Mela Mrs Stella Walsh Mrs Christine Gratus Dr Anita Thomas Dr Ann Prentice |
| Government Observers and other attendees | Dr Fiona Bissett (Scottish Directorate of Health and Wellbeing) Mrs Maureen Howell (Welsh Assembly) Dr Naresh Chada (Northern Ireland Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety) Dr Alison Tedstone (FSA) |
| Secretariat | Dr Sheela Reddy (DH) Dr Elaine Stone (FSA) Ms Lynda Harrop (FSA) Mr Michael Griffin (FSA) Ms Rachel Coomber (DH) |

Closed Session

1. The Chair welcomed Members to the 24th SACN meeting. Prior to the main business of the meeting, which would be held in open session, there were two matters which needed to be addressed in closed session: the SACN draft statements on fibre and health, and the DH Scotland vitamin D paper.

Narrative synthesis paper on fibre and health and SACN statement on dietary fibre (SACN/08/20)

2. Dr Elaine Stone provided the Committee with background and context to the paper: a definition for fibre will shortly be discussed at international level and it is important for Member States to agree their positions as this will be put forward as part of the EU view in forthcoming Codex negotiations. This definition will also have an impact on nutrition and health claims legislation and will become legislation in the UK.
3. A review on fibre and health had been commissioned for the deliberations of the Carbohydrate Working Group. The review had been carried out by the Medical Research Council's Human Nutrition Research Centre in Cambridge and considered each component that might be considered to contribute to fibre. The review is still in draft form, but this had been used as the basis for consideration by the Carbohydrate Working Group. This Group had agreed a statement on which components might be included in the definition of dietary fibre and this formed the basis of the Committee's considerations.
4. Professor Ian Macdonald, Chair of the Carbohydrate Working Group presented the paper, emphasising that the purpose was not to consider the draft report from MRC-HNR in detail as this would be further considered by the Working Group in the autumn. The Working Group had prepared a draft statement which had already been agreed in principle during a telephone conference.
5. It was explained that the narrative synthesis on fibre and health attempts to evaluate the different components of fibre in relation to different physiological effects, including:
 - Increased stool bulk;
 - Reduction in colonic transit time;
 - Reduced post prandial glycaemia;
 - Increased satiety.
6. It was asked whether a full meta-analysis could be conducted where this would be relevant for the different sections of the report. It was confirmed that this would

be done where possible, but that with time constraints it was only possible to carry out a narrative synthesis on the evidence.

7. The following points were noted in relation to the statement and the conclusions reached by the Working Group.
 - The phrase ‘robust evidence’ should be properly defined so it is clear what level of evidence is being included;
 - Definitions/findings should be recast in context of agreed definitions and guidelines;
 - There were some ambiguities in the language used i.e. demonstrable physiological effects (vague) vs. health benefit (more specific);
 - A clarifying sentence is needed about what the Working Group defines as fibre.

8. There was some discussion about the difference between the definition of fibre being presented to the Committee and those that are being put forward on an EU level. It was noted that the EU definitions are less specific and may include a range of components which have been attributed as having “fibre-like” properties. The approach adopted by SACN was to assess the evidence which allowed physiological or other effects to be attributed to dietary components which separately or together had been included within the definition(s) of fibre which had been adopted.

9. It was agreed that subject to the proposed revisions the draft statement adequately captured the risk assessment of the putative benefits of dietary components which had been incorporated under the definition of dietary fibre. Approval of the final draft would be carried out by correspondence. In the light of comments made by committee members, the HNR drafting team would further revise the draft fibre and health report and this revision would be circulated to the Committee.

Action: Secretariat

Vitamin D paper (SACN/08/21)

10. The Chair introduced the paper explaining that following publication of SACN's position statement Update on Vitamin D in 2007, several questions had been raised by the Scottish Group in relation to vitamin D and public health. Members were informed that these questions had been considered by SMCN at their meeting on 19th May, as several Members of the Subgroup had been closely involved with in drafting the report. Minutes of the discussion were circulated to Members, alongside the paper from the Scottish Health Department, for information.

11. The Chair acknowledged the difficulties for advisors and policy makers alike in making recommendations in this fast moving field. The overall consensus from the Committee was that the new evidence presented in the paper supported the conclusions reached in the Update from SACN and did not materially change the position statement on vitamin D from the Committee.

12. Members emphasised the importance of being cautious about interpreting evidence from RCTs alone and of acknowledging the role of observational studies. Members also noted that SACN's conclusions had been reached after full consideration of the available evidence. The Committee highlighted the significant progress made in the UK in relation to the problem of rickets. They also acknowledged the considerable current interest in the potential role of vitamin D in many conditions other than rickets and agreed to keep the emerging evidence under review.

Open Session

13. The Chair welcomed Members, observers and external attendees to the open session of the 24th SACN meeting, the first to be held in the devolved offices of the Food Standards Agency on a bi-annual basis. External attendees were informed that they would have an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the meeting.

14. Apologies were received from Professors Peter Aggett, Sheila Bingham, Peter Kopelman and from Dr Anthony Williams. No new declarations of interest were received.

Agenda Item 1 – Minutes of previous Committee meeting on 07 February 08 SACN main Committee meeting (SACN/08/min/02)

15. Members were invited to comment on the minutes of the meeting on 07 February 2008 (SACN/08/min/02).

16. The following amendments were noted and agreed:

- Ann Prentice’s apologies to be noted;
- Amend last sentence in paragraph 5 to say ‘or other factors’;
- Remove bullet 3 of paragraph 67 referring genetic testing;
- Change “reductions in intake of lowest quintile” to ‘members encouraged the FSA to undertake detailed analysis before detailed changes’.

Action: Secretariat

17. The remainder of the minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting on 07 February 2008.

Matters Arising Action Check List (SACN/08/11)

18. Dr Alison Tedstone reported progress on matters arising from previous meetings. Members were invited to comment. It was noted that an action from paragraph 64 concerning nutrition and health legislation was omitted from the minutes of the previous meeting.

Action: Secretariat

SACN/07/min/04 – Trans fat minutes

19. The Committee were informed that the FSA is undertaking further research on trans fat as a result of a recommendation from SACN. FSA are currently appraising research proposals on this topic.

SACN/07/05 – *LIDNS report*

20. Members were informed that a questionnaire to capture comments on the report would be circulated in due course.

Action: Secretariat

SACN/07/16 – *COMs / dissemination strategy*

21. The paper on COMs strategy (SACN/08/13) was discussed under agenda item 2.

SACN/07/24 – *Selenium paper*

22. The paper was discussed under AOB.

SACN/07/29 – *NDNS Rolling Programme*

23. An update was provided to the Committee about reasons for poor response rates in different population groups. This information was limited because the majority of refusals were given on the doorstep, and no further information was gathered.

SACN/07/29 – *Salt (FSA update)*

24. An update on the process of salt data collection was tabled at the meeting in response to a query at the previous meeting (SACN/08/12).

SACN/07/29 – *MRC strategic review of nutrition*

25. Dr Sheela Reddy provided an update on the review, informing Members that this review was still in progress and that they would be kept up to date with any developments.

Action: Secretariat

SACN/07/HS/05 – *Risk assessment process*

26. A new format for the government updates has been piloted at this meeting and will be available for comment at the end of agenda item 6.

Agenda item 4 – Human Genetics Commission paper (SACN/08/23)

27. The Chair introduced the paper, reminding Members that they had already agreed to prepare a short statement on genetic testing and personalised nutrition. Comments on the prepared draft were invited.

28. The following comments were noted:

- A simple statement at the beginning to make it clear to whom this advice is directed should be included;
- It was considered more appropriate to refer to alcohol consumption as “very limited” rather than “moderate”;

29. The Chair confirmed that the purpose of this statement was to have a clear position on this increasingly important topic that could be used as the basis for advice in response to enquiries. The next steps would be to circulate the statement to the Human Genetics Commission and if agreed, for it to be placed on the FSA and SACN websites.

Action: Secretariat

AOB – SACN website

30. The new SACN website is up and running and Members are encouraged to send any comments to the Secretariat. A number of members who had seen the website commented on the improvement on the previous version.

Action: Members

Agenda item 2 – COMS strategy (SACN/08/13)

31. Dr Alison Tedstone introduced the paper, explaining that the main driver for this strategy is to improve procedures for putting SACN reports into the public domain. There is also a need to determine if there any other important factors in this area that need consideration.
32. It was agreed that the responsibility of the Committee lies principally in weighing scientific evidence but that there may be a role in public education in certain specific areas
33. The process for alerting stakeholders when reports are published was discussed. The Secretariat confirmed that there is already a stakeholder list which is used to alert key stakeholders. It was suggested that Members should be provided with the opportunity to add to this list. In addition it was confirmed that the new SACN website has a mailing list system which all interested parties can sign up to and which therefore gives the option to declare interests in specific areas of work carried out by SACN.

Action: Secretariat

34. The Secretariat confirmed that it was important to ensure that the Secretary of State for Health was adequately informed of the Committee's work. Members were assured that Ministers and the Board of the FSA are informed of the substantial work of the Committee as a routine. Minutes are not circulated as a matter of course, but any important issues are raised internally with officials in the Department of Health and the FSA.
35. It was agreed that it would be useful to evaluate the nature of the communications 'strategy' in relation to specific work that has been done and that this could be revisited at a future Horizon Scanning meeting.

Action: Secretariat

36. Members requested that the paper be revised to clarify that main reports will continue to be published in hard copy and that they would have ISBN numbers. In addition, Members were informed that position statements will be published in hard copy on an adhoc basis and annual reports would only published online.

Action: Secretariat

37. The issue of updates about the work of the Committee was discussed. It was confirmed that updates are already placed in the FSA newsletter on an ad hoc basis. The Secretariat also confirmed that DH has a series of publications which provide updates to health professionals, and in Wales there is a physical activity network through which information of this sort is communicated. Other approaches to effective dissemination were discussed. The Secretariat agreed to find out if academic journals would accept updates on SACN's work and also to establish whether SACN reports can be published on UKPMC.

Action: Secretariat**Agenda item 3 – Nutrient Profiling (SACN/08/14)**

38. Dr Alison Tedstone presented the paper on Nutrient Profiling and updated Members on the progress of the review, informing them that review would go out for public consultation in July 2008.

39. Members were reminded that the model was developed to be used to inform OFCOM about advertising to children. The consultation was concerned with this limited objective and was not seen as having any wider applications.

40. The Committee were informed that following the consultation and period of consideration the model would come back to them for discussion. A point of detail was noted that "high energy" should be referred to instead of "high fat".

Action: Secretariat**Agenda item 4 – Saturated Fat recommended level (SACN/08/15)**

41. The Chair welcomed Judith Holden from the FSA who presented a paper on the FSA's proposals for a guideline value for saturated fat intake. It was explained

that this work was undertaken as part of a programme of FSA activities to address saturated fat levels in the UK population, which includes a consumer campaign for early 2009. The availability of an easily understandable guideline value against which consumers could measure their own intake would be a powerful tool in getting across messages to consumers.

42. The rationale for developing a guideline value in absolute terms is that current levels recommended by COMA are expressed as a percentage of energy intake, and as such may be difficult to interpret for many consumers. The FSA therefore modelled guideline absolute values at various levels based on NDNS or dietary reference values for energy intake. The Committee were asked to specifically discuss:

- whether there was agreement with the overall principle simplifying the range of values implicit in the COMA recommendations into a single figure;
- whether there was agreement with the approach used by the FSA to derive the figure.

43. The following comments were made in relation to the paper:

- It is important to ensure that the absolute value is accurate, justifiable and credible;
- The approach of using NDNS energy values is likely to result in a guideline value which is too low as NDNS is known to underestimate energy intakes by up to 25%;
- It is important to derive the figure from actual energy intakes as far as possible and the dietary reference values may be a better option than NDNS;
- Caution needs to be taken about giving consumers mixed messages (COMA recommendations are in percentages);

44. It was clarified that the effectiveness of any such campaign would be evaluated through NDNS by monitoring population intakes of saturated fats as a percentage of energy.

45. Following a comment requesting clarification on the implications for children and different groups of consumers, it was confirmed that the values were derived from a calculation to convert percentage energy into grams and that it was decided that a range of numbers would be difficult for consumers to interpret. In addition, the number was rounded down on the basis that there is no minimum requirement for saturated fat.
46. There was general agreement from Members that establishing a guideline value which consumers could understand in terms of intakes of foods could be of considerable benefit but that the implications needed further consideration. It was suggested that SMCN should consider implications for children, and that it might be worth modelling the extremes of ranges. The FSA agreed to consider the next steps and report back to the Committee.

Action: Secretariat

Agenda item 5 – Working Group updates

Sub Group on Maternal and Child Nutrition (SMCN)

47. Ms Rachel Coomber updated Members on the latest discussions held by SMCN on 19 May 2008, highlighting that a revised structure of the draft report on the *Influence of maternal, fetal and child nutrition on the development of disease in later life* had now been agreed and that the Secretariat would continue drafting the report.
48. In addition, Members had commented on a draft scope outlining some initial ideas for the evaluation of Healthy Start and these comments had been fed back to DH. A draft scope for evaluation would now be drawn up and SMCN would have the opportunity to comment on this.
49. The Committee were informed that SMCN had also agreed the revised statement on multiple pregnancies (SACN/08/22). The statement informed parliamentary

debate on the Health and Social Care Bill, and this was tabled for information. This statement would now be made available on the SACN website.

Energy Working Group

49. The Committee were informed that the Energy Working Group last met on 23 May 2008 and are finalising the draft energy report which will be brought to the SACN Main Committee meeting in October 2008 for consideration.

Carbohydrate Working Group

50. The Carbohydrate Working Group met for the first time on 16th April 2008. They agreed the terms of reference, which includes dental health aspect. The next meeting of this group will be on 26th September 2008.

Nutrition Professionals Confederation (NPC)

51. The next meeting of the Nutrition Professions Confederation is being organised for early October 2008. Members were informed that following that meeting they would be provided with a definitive statement about the future of this group.

Iron

52. Members were informed that substantial progress is now being made on the iron report and that it is being updated with new evidence. A draft would be brought to the SACN main meeting in October 2008.

53. Members of the Iron Working Group requested that they have sight of the draft report, and perhaps meet to discuss it prior to the October meeting. In addition, it was suggested that it would be useful to discuss the report at a future horizon scanning meeting and to use it as an example of how to carry out work in the future.

Action: Secretariat

ANANF

54. The draft ANANF report is being finalised by the joint ACNFP/SACN secretariat and a meeting is being set up for the autumn.

Agenda item 6 – Government updates on nutrition related activities

FSA (SACN/08/16)

55. Members were informed that, at their request, a new format for the government updates is being piloted and Members were invited to comment. It was suggested that the evaluation column needs to give information about what is being evaluated and what the outputs or outcome measures are. In addition, it was suggested that information such as the date evaluation was completed should be included, and clarification about whether it is evaluation of process or impact, was requested. Given the detailed nature of the format it was suggested that it would be helpful if new activities could be highlighted.

Action: Secretariat

56. Dr Alison Tedstone gave an update of FSA activities highlighting several areas in particular:

- *NDNS rolling programme* – Recruitment is underway for the rolling programme and some key results on salt monitoring were expected the following month. The issue of underreporting and of gathering data in specific subgroups of the population was discussed. FSA acknowledged that underreporting is a problem and that money is being put into biomarker research to try and address this. In addition the rolling programme design enables specific questions to be answered by subgroups of the population. It was also confirmed that pregnant women are specifically excluded due to the complexities associated with collecting data on this subgroup. However, modification to the survey design would be considered once the survey has been up and running for a year or two.
- *Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey (LIDNS)* – It was confirmed that no further analysis has been commissioned by the Agency but that this might be a

possibility depending on SACN's recommendations following further discussion at the October 2008 meeting.

- *Fish sustainability review* – The issue of fish, agriculture and food security has been raised as an important issue in relation to recommendations for the population to consume more oily fish. It was noted that the issue of sustainable fish supplies might be seen as a subset of the more general issue of food security. There is an ongoing consultation on the sustainability of fish supplies and publication is expected in the autumn. This review will consider oily and white fish separately. It was confirmed that SACN will have the opportunity to comment on this report, as a key stakeholder. There was a suggestion that algal oils be considered as part of this review given their widespread, and increasing, use in the food chain and their potential importance as an alternative source of n-3 LCPUFA.
- *Manual of Nutrition* – The 11th edition of the manual was published on 9 May 2008 and Members were invited to draw it to the attention of colleagues.
- *Institutions* – Members queried how and where the Health Care Commissions regulatory framework can be accessed and used. It was confirmed that FSA guidance has been picked up by DH and is being used in care homes and by the Health Care Commission.

DH (SACN/08/17)

57. Dr Sheela Reddy gave an update on DH activities highlighting in particular the National Child Measurement Programme, Healthy Start, Infant Feeding and the Review of Food Policy.

58. Members asked whether there is a system for reviewing the monetary value of Healthy Start vouchers. Sheela Reddy explained that this was mainly undertaken by the Treasury and that a review had been carried out in April '08. DH undertook

to confirm whether there would be another review and, if so, what would be considered.

Action: Secretariat

59. Members were provided with a copy of the advice to ministers on additional nutrient requirements for twin pregnancy in response to a question by the Twin and Multiple Birth Association.

60. Members requested clarification about whether any information would be collected on children's awareness as part of the work on restricting advertising to children. It was confirmed that an interim report was being carried out to look at the direction of the change and not to look specifically at children's attitudes.

Devolved Health Departments (SACN/08/18)

Northern Ireland

61. Dr Naresh Chada gave an update on Northern Ireland activities.

62. A Member requested clarification about whether the OPSG extended as far as management of obesity and it was confirmed that consideration was given as to whether this should be part of the remit. It was also confirmed that OPSG is not inconsistent with DH/NICE guidance.

63. There was concern that the Health Departments are not communicating appropriately and Members were reassured that the devolved Health Departments are fully aware of strategies and initiatives in England.

Wales

64. Maureen Howell gave an update on Welsh activities. It was noted by Members that the report provided a number of examples of good collaboration between trained nutritional professionals and good examples of reports on evaluation.

Scotland

65. Dr Fiona Bissett gave an update on Scottish activities, highlighting in particular that an infant feeding coordinator has now been appointed to develop infant feeding strategy for children up to 2 years old, and that it will focus mainly on breast feeding.

EFSA (SACN/08/08)

66. Written report only. No additional comments made.

67. In addition to the update report, Dr Alison Tedstone informed the Committee about the work being undertaken by EFSA working group on folic acid in relation to folic acid and cancer risks. The panel would be meeting again later in the year and some Members may be invited to sit on the panel.

AOB**Item 1 – Agriculture Workshop**

68. The Committee were informed that the work on agriculture and food, specifically the Agriculture Workshop, would now be taken forward by GACs.

Item 2 – Selenium Report

69. Members confirmed that they were happy with the content of the revised selenium report but that the language and presentation needed some work.

Action: Secretariat

Item 3 – Annual Report and appraisals

70. Members were informed that the 2007 SACN annual report would be circulated once published. Members are encouraged to forward completed appraisal forms to the Secretariat.

Action: Members and Secretariat**Item 4 – NDNS progress**

71. Members were informed that the NDNS paper is being progressed and would be published shortly.

Next meeting

72. The next meeting is scheduled for 23 October 2008.

Questions from external attendees

73. The Chair asked external attendees present if they had any questions and the following points were raised:

- Brian Ratcliffe of SFAC asked about health effects of A1/A2 milk. FSA confirmed that they were looking at the evidence relating to this and could provide further detail if required;
- Hugh Galbraith of Aberdeen University – whether SACN engages fully with other authorities such as EFSA. It was confirmed that there is cross-Committee engagement by putting out reports at an early stage to allow evidence to feed in from different sources and through cross-Committee working with GACS.
- Andrew Cameron of Leatherhead Food – There will need to be buy in from the food industry in order to reduce levels of saturated fat down to those suggested. It was confirmed that these recommendations are being considered in the wider context of other pieces of legislation such as the nutrition and health claims regulation.

74. The Chair thanked Members and other attendees for their attendance and closed the meeting.