

# Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

---

**15<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE SUBGROUP ON MATERNAL AND CHILD NUTRITION**  
**19 January 2011, Room LG19, Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road,**  
**London SE1 8UG**

## **FINAL MINUTES**

### **Attendees:**

Dr Anthony Williams (Chair)  
Professor Alan Jackson  
Dr Ann Prentice  
Professor Annie Anderson  
Dr Ken Ong  
Professor Peter Aggett  
Dr Robert Fraser  
Dr Sian Robinson  
Dr Stella Walsh  
Professor Tim Key

### **Secretariat:**

Lisa Miles  
Rachel Elsom  
Rachel Marklew  
Dr Sheela Reddy

### **Observers:**

Dr Alison Tedstone (DH)  
Dr Clair Baynton (DH) (for agenda item 3 only)  
Phyll Buchanan (DH)  
Rachel White (DH) (for agenda item 3)  
Sarah Hardy (FSA)  
Sue Hattersley (FSA)  
Susan Sky (Welsh Assembly)

### **Chair's Introduction**

1. The Chair welcomed Members to the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition. No apologies were received.

**AGENDA ITEM 1 – Minutes of last meeting**

2. Members were invited to comment on the minutes of the previous meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2010 (SMCN/10/min01). The following amendments were agreed:
  - Paragraph 14, bullet 2 – remove the second “only” from this sentence
  - Paragraph 20, bullet 1 – specify what the T1DM autoantibodies were
  - Paragraph 20, bullet 2 – check whether “insulin antibodies (IA)” should be changed to “insulinoma antibodies”
  - Page 11, bullet 3 – amend sentence to say “EFSA did not review any direct data on the relationship....”
3. Pending the above corrections, the minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

**Matters arising**

4. Dr Sheela Reddy reported the progress on matters arising from the previous meeting.

SMCN/10/07

5. Dr Reddy noted that the executive summary and recommendations for the report on ‘The influence of maternal, fetal and child nutrition on the development of chronic disease in later life’ had now been finalised and the report was undergoing some final editing before publication.
6. Dr Reddy noted that there were currently printing restrictions within the Department, so the intention was to publish the final report on the SACN website initially, and the Secretariat would continue looking into the possibility of printing hard copies of the report.

**ACTION: Secretariat**

SMCN/10/09

7. Dr Sheela Reddy updated the Committee on the status of communications with the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) regarding their recommendation for the use of high dose folic acid supplements by obese women wishing to become pregnant. At the previous SMCN meeting, the Subgroup agreed that there is evidence to suggest obese pregnant women have an increased risk of a neural tube defect-affected birth, but that current evidence does not support a population recommendation for high dose folic acid supplements for obese women wishing to become pregnant. The Subgroup reiterated this conclusion and noted that the use of 5mg folic acid supplements is a clinical intervention since these are only available on prescription. Advising further on the matter is thus outside the remit of SACN. It was agreed that the draft letter to RCOG should be sent to Dr Anthony Williams and Dr Bob Fraser for comment. Similar letters will be sent to the British Dietetic Association, the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Royal College of Physicians.

**ACTION: Secretariat**

**AGENDA ITEM 2 – Timing of introduction of gluten into the infant diet (SMCN/11/01)**

8. The Chair introduced this item by providing some background. Following previous discussions by the Subgroup and the Committee on Toxicity (COT) a draft joint statement on the timing of introduction of gluten into the infant diet has been written (agenda paper SMCN/11/01). The draft statement summarises and examines published evidence initially reviewed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in preparing its 2009 statement on the timing of introduction of gluten into the infant diet. The EFSA Opinion is inconsistent with current UK infant feeding advice.
9. The statement was most recently discussed at the COT meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December, which Prof Peter Aggett attended to represent SMCN. Editorial comments from the COT were incorporated into the current version of the statement (agenda paper SMCN/11/01).

10. The Chair took the Committee through the detail of the statement section by section to ensure that the wording captured the detail of the scientific evidence and the Committee's points on interpretation. A number of editorial changes were agreed. The key changes discussed were:

- Insert weblinks to the minutes of relevant COT and SMCN meeting discussions on the timing of introduction of gluten.
- Bring forward condensed versions of the annexes on coeliac disease and type 1 diabetes mellitus into the body of the statement, to ensure that the reader is aware of issues around genetic predisposition before reading the detail of the relevant studies.
- Insert information about the prevalence of HLA-DQ2 or HLA-DQ8 haplotypes in the general population.
- Provide more detail in the description of the Wahlberg *et al.* (2006) study including further odds ratios and the exact autoantibodies used as outcome measures.
- If relevant, after checking the Norris *et al.* (2005) study, insert comments about the possibility of reverse causality influencing results.
- Insert a footnote to explain that ideally studies examining the timing of introduction of gluten into the infant diet should have used a resolution of timing in weeks.
- Expand the critique of the study by Wahlberg *et al.* (2006) to indicate its mixed findings.
- Add a footnote to explain that the findings of the recent Welander *et al.* (2010) study do not change the Committee's conclusions.
- Add a description of the Welander *et al.* (2010) study into the annexes.
- Add a mention of the reported association between longer duration of breastfeeding and reduced risk of developing coeliac disease by Akobeng *et al.* (2006) in the conclusions.
- Add the following statements to the overall conclusions:

“Currently available evidence suggests that dietary introduction of gluten-containing foods in the period up to and including the third completed month of age is associated with an increased risk of coeliac disease”

“SACN and COT do not consider that there is sufficient evidence to support the introduction of gluten into the infant diet between 4-6 months of age with the aim of reducing the risk of subsequent development of coeliac disease and T1DM, as was concluded by EFSA”.

**ACTION: Secretariat**

11. It was agreed that the Secretariat would make these amendments to the joint statement and then send a revised version to the Chair, the COT Chair and Prof Peter Aggett for comments. The statement would then be sent to the Subgroup for agreement prior to the SACN meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> February.
12. It was hoped that, subject to discussions at the SACN meeting, the statement could be published by the end of March 2011.

**AGENDA ITEM 3 – Draft scope and Terms of Reference for review of complementary and young child feeding (SMCN/11/02)**

13. The Chair introduced the paper (SMCN/11/02) which outlined a proposed approach for a review of complementary and young child feeding. Members were reminded that at the last meeting, the Subgroup had been presented with an initial draft scope and it was agreed that the review should begin by appraising current recommendations for infants and young children in the UK. The Subgroup had also agreed to address the 0-2 year age group first, and then 2-5 years.
14. The Chair drew attention to Annex 1, which summarised relevant current advice in this area, and also the three main areas identified in paper SMCN/11/02 for review: a) maternal diet during breastfeeding, b) diet in infants and young children, and c) behavioural aspects of infant feeding. The Chair noted that not all topics listed would necessarily fall within SACN’s remit, but that SACN should be aware of certain

advice (e.g. alcohol, peanut and fish consumption during breastfeeding) in order to make any food-based guidance.

15. The Chair noted that forthcoming substantive changes to energy requirements for infants and young children would necessitate appraisal of the impact of these changes on micronutrient requirements and dietary recommendations. The Chair also highlighted the growing body of scientific evidence in behavioural aspects of infant feeding.
16. Members asked about resources available for the review. Dr Sheela Reddy explained that although current members of the SMCN Secretariat would be leaving in March 2011, other members of the main SACN Secretariat will be allocated to the SMCN Secretariat.
17. The Chair invited comments on the draft scope and terms of reference. Members suggested the evidence in each area should be reviewed systematically, but it was noted that the quality of evidence in some areas might not allow a full systematic review. Members commented that a number of areas have already been subject to review elsewhere, and it was agreed that an initial scoping stage to identify the amount and type of evidence available for each topic was required. This could draw on existing reviews and identify areas that may benefit from systematic review of the evidence.
18. In addition, the following key points were noted:
  - A review of nutrition requirements for breastfeeding mothers should include consideration of the mother's diet and quality of her milk, as well as aspects relating to the transfer of foods or ingredients through breastmilk. It was agreed that some consideration of Dietary Reference Values (DRVs) for lactating women, where these may affect infant intake, should form part of the review.
  - Some consideration of the DRVs for young children should also be included, specifically with regard to the evidence supporting these.

- Areas such as infectious disease, gut health, handling and preparation of formula etc would not specifically be considered by SACN, but the Committee would be drawing on advice from other experts and would therefore be aware of existing advice in other areas to inform the review. It was agreed that SACN should be clear about what they would not be considering as part of the review.
  - Consideration of partially hydrolysed formula should form part of the review with regard to advice on its use for the general population.
  - The Committee should be explicit about what is meant by dietary diversification i.e. increasing the variety and nutrient density of the diet.
  - Consideration of supplements for children should include both vitamins and minerals as appropriate.
  - Consideration of other drinks should not overlook the impact of newer products such as 'vitamin water'.
  - Behavioural aspects of infant feeding should include psychological and social aspects, and additional expertise would need to be consulted as appropriate.
  - It was noted that precautionary advice might also be required for some areas.
  - The referenced source for advice on phytoestrogens in Annex 1 should be updated with the correct 2003 reference.
19. Members expressed some concern about the large scope of the review and there was general agreement that the review should be broken down into manageable sections. After some discussion, it was agreed that with regard to feeding and nutrition of infants and young children, the 0-2 year age group should be reviewed first, initially considering priority areas within 0-12 months. This should include the timing and pace of dietary diversification, including introduction of potentially allergenic foods and any other areas considered priority. This should be followed by consideration of the remaining areas within the 0-2 year age group, and then addressing the 2-5 year age group separately.
20. Members broadly agreed with the draft Terms of Reference, although it was noted that these should explicitly include mention of provision of advice. It was also agreed that these should remain as working Terms of Reference for the current time.

21. With regard to drawing on other areas of expertise from other committees and/or individuals for the review, it was agreed that this should be considered in more detail once the initial stage of scoping the evidence has been completed.
22. The Secretariat agreed to make revisions to the draft scope and Terms of Reference in light of the Subgroup's discussion, and a revised draft would be presented to Members at the main SACN meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2011 for discussion. This paper would include an additional section outlining the Subgroup's proposed approach to undertaking the review.

**ACTION: Secretariat**

**AOB**

23. The Chair drew attention to an additional paper tabled for discussion (SMCN/11/AOB) regarding an article published by Fewtrell *et al.* in the British Medical Journal online on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2011. The Chair noted that the article had questioned the evidence underpinning the Department of Health's policy on infant feeding, particularly advice to exclusively breastfeed for 6 months and introduction of solid foods around six months, and this was followed by extensive media coverage. Members were informed that the Chairs of SACN and SMCN had drafted a response to the BMJ article, to be submitted as a 'rapid response' online on behalf of the Committee.
24. The Chair invited Members to comment on the draft response. Following discussion in which Members suggested some changes, it was agreed that the revised draft should be signed off by both Chairs and submitted to the BMJ as soon as possible.

**ACTION: Secretariat**

25. Members asked if the Subgroup's specific Terms of Reference were subject to change following the outcome of the Department of Health's review of Advisory Non-Departmental Public Bodies (ANDPBs) and asked what effect this will have on the Committee. Dr Sheela Reddy explained that the Committee was currently operating

under the same process and that SACN continues to provide expert advice on nutrition to Government, including other government departments. Members were informed that the Department was going through a transition process, but that this would not require any re-application or other work by members.

26. The Chair thanked Rachel Marklew and Lisa Miles, who will be leaving the Department of Health at the end of March, for their invaluable support and contribution to the SMCN Secretariat.

### **Next meeting**

8. The next Subgroup meeting will be held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2011.