



Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

27th MEETING

10th June 2009, Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6NH

Final Minutes

Chairman	Professor Alan Jackson
Members	Professor Peter Aggett Professor Annie Anderson Dr Paul Haggarty Professor Tim Key Professor Ian Macdonald Dr David Mela Mrs Stella Walsh Dr Tony Williams Dr Anita Thomas Dr Ann Prentice
Government Observers and other attendees	Mrs Maureen Howell (Welsh Assembly) Dr Naresh Chada (Northern Ireland Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety)
Secretariat	Dr Alison Tedstone (FSA) Dr Sheela Reddy (DH) Ms Mamta Singh (FSA) Ms Rachel Elsom (FSA) Ms Vicki Pyne (FSA) Mr Michael Griffin (FSA)

Morning Session

Closed Session

1. The Chair welcomed Members to the 27th SACN meeting and explained that the business that morning would be held in closed session.

Agenda item 1 – Draft Early Nutrition report (SACN/09/14)

2. Dr Tony Williams presented the latest draft of the Early Nutrition report which was last seen by the Committee in February 2005. The report has been changed significantly since then and Members were asked if they were happy with the general direction of the report, to highlight any amendments that were required and to comment on the conclusions and recommendations.
3. The report was then considered chapter by chapter. The following main points were noted:
 - Members congratulated the subgroup and drafting group on a clearly written, and very interesting and useful report.
 - Further work is required on section 5 and beyond.
 - The latter sections do not demonstrate clear links between early nutrition and cardiovascular disease or cancer.
 - Members noted that birth weight may not be an adequate marker of fetal exposure. What birth weight represents in terms of metabolic capacity needs to be considered.
 - A short section on the effect of producing offspring on maternal health needs to be included.
 - The report should highlight the gaps in evidence.
4. A number of comments were made on the text and it was concluded that the reports needs further redrafting. As a result, no suggestions were made on the conclusions and recommendations.
5. It was agreed that Members would forward any further comments to the secretariat via email and that the report will be redrafted accordingly. The subsequent draft will then be discussed by the Subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition (SMCN) before returning to the Main Committee at a later date.

Agenda item 2 – Draft statement to the Chief Medical Officer on folic acid and potential cancer risk (SACN/09/15)

6. Professor Alan Jackson introduced the draft statement prepared for the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), explaining the outcome of the review of SACN's previous recommendation for mandatory folic acid fortification, following further consideration of evidence on folic acid and colorectal cancer risk.
7. The Chair reminded Members that, following SACN's recommendation for mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid in 2006, SACN had been asked by the CMO in 2007 to further consider two papers, by Cole et al (2007)¹ and Mason et al (2007)² on folic acid and potential cancer risk, which were published after the SACN report on Folate and Health³. A SACN Working Group on Folic Acid and Colorectal Cancer Risk was set up to further consider the evidence and comprised members of SACN, the Committee on Carcinogenicity, and an external expert.
8. The Chair informed the Committee that the Working Group had met three times between January 2008 and March 2009. The first meeting considered the studies by Cole et al (2007) and Mason et al (2007). The second and third meetings considered the results of a meta-analysis of a number of trials investigating the association between B vitamins (including folic acid) and cardiovascular disease (CVD) which had also collected data on cancer outcomes.
9. Members were invited to comment on the draft statement and a number of amendments were suggested.
10. Members were asked if they agreed with the conclusions and recommendations of the Working Group. The majority of Members supported the recommendation. It was agreed that the statement would be redrafted to reflect the points that had been raised by Members. It was also agreed that the statement would need to

¹ Cole BF *et al.* Folic acid for the prevention of colorectal adenomas. *JAMA*. 2007; 297:2351-2359.

² Mason JB *et al.* A temporal association between folic acid fortification and an increase in colorectal cancer rates may be illuminating important biological principles: a hypothesis. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev*. 2007; **16**:1325-29.

include an additional paragraph reporting on the discussions that had taken place at the SACN meeting that day. Members were informed that the revised statement would be circulated to them for agreement.

Action: Secretariat

Open Session

11. The Chair welcomed Members, Observers and external attendees to the open session of the 27th SACN meeting and apologised to external attendees for the delay in beginning the open session.
12. Apologies were received from Professor Peter Kopelman, Mrs Christine Gratus, Dr Fiona Bisset (Scottish Observer), Elaine Stone (FSA), Lynda Harrop (FSA) and Rachel Coomber (DH).
13. The Chair announced the retirement of Professor Sheila Bingham from SACN and expressed the Committees appreciation for the time, effort and personal commitment that Professor Bingham has given SACN since 2001 and, for many years before that, the valuable contributions on the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food and Nutrition Policy.

Agenda Item 3 – Minutes of SACN meeting on 12 and 13 February 2009 (SACN/09/min/01)

14. Members were invited to comment on the minutes of the meeting held on 12 and 13 February 2009 (SACN/09/min/01).
15. The following amendments were noted and agreed:
 - *Paragraph 3, bullet 2:* Reword end of sentence to read “only related to functional outcomes of extreme deficiency or excess”
 - *Paragraph 23, bullet 3, last sentence:* Clarify whether the intake is regulated by mother/infant.
 - *Paragraph 29:* “making a decision” to read “finalising its advice”

16. The remainder of the minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting on 12 and 13 January 2009.

Matters Arising Action Check List (SACN/09/13)

SACN/09/01 – Iron Report

17. Members were informed that the Iron and Health report will go out for public consultation on 17th June 2009.

SACN/09/03 – Energy Report

18. The Committee was informed that due to the amount of work needed on the Energy report it is unlikely that a draft of the report will be ready for consultation in July 2009. The Working Group and secretariat will reconsider the timeline and an updated draft of the document will be circulated to the Chair for final comment before going out to consultation.

Action: Secretariat

SACN/09/07 – Brief Committee on saturated fat campaign

19. The secretariat agreed to invite a member of the saturated fat team to the main meeting in October 2009

Action: Secretariat

SACN/09/07 – Update on food security and sustainability

20. The secretariat agreed to arrange for the Committee to receive an update on sustainability at a future meeting.

Action: Secretariat

AOB – Selenium report

21. Members were informed that due to new evidence, the Selenium report will need a major redraft and the secretariat plan to commission this externally.

Action: Secretariat

Agenda item 4 – COMs strategy (SACN/09/16)

22. Dr Alison Tedstone introduced the draft COMs strategy paper to the Committee pointing out slight changes to the distribution list and the addition of a flow chart for the publication of SACN reports and statements.

23. Members made the following comments:

- It is unclear how a decision is made on what is and isn't high profile and whether there is any scope for SACN having a say in this.
- The British Nutrition Foundation should not be on the diagram as a specific example.
- The strategy appears to be more of an information document and there should be discussions on how SACN wish to handle reports.
- The Institute of Medicine and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) should be included in the distribution lists.

24. It was agreed that the Committee will hold further discussions on this issue at a later date with the possibility of this being placed on the agenda for the next Horizon Scanning meeting in October 2009.

Agenda item 5 – Working Group updates**Sub Group on Maternal and Child Nutrition (SMCN)**

25. Dr Tony Williams updated Members on the main activities of SMCN. Members were informed that the Subgroup meeting planned for 15th May 2009 was cancelled although the early nutrition report that would have been discussed was

still discussed at agenda item 1. The next meeting will be held on 11th September 2009.

Energy Working Group

26. Professor Alan Jackson informed the Committee that the Energy Working Group will convene after the energy consultation which will begin later in the year.

Carbohydrate Working Group

27. The Carbohydrate Working Group last met on 23rd March 2009 and Professor Ian Macdonald updated Members on progress. Since the last meeting, the tender for work on the cardio-metabolic health review has been awarded to Victoria Burley of the University of Leeds. Dr Peter Sanderson has put together a plan for the review on colonic health which will be discussed when the Working Group convenes on 21st September 2009. Professor Macdonald also pointed out that the Working Group needs to co-opt a dental expert and that Professor Ian Johnson has already been co-opted onto the Working Group for his expertise in colonic health.

Iron Working Group

28. The Committee were updated on the progress of the Iron and Health scientific consultation which is to be released on 17th June 2009 by Professor Peter Aggett. It was agreed that Members would see an advanced copy of the Iron and Health report once the draft had been finalised.

29. Professor Aggett took the opportunity to thank Mamta Singh and the Working Group Members for all their hard work on the report.

Approaches to the Nutritional Assessment of novel Foods (ANANF) Subgroup

30. Professor Alan Jackson updated the Committee on the ANANF subgroup, explaining that there were no plans for another meeting and the proposed guidance for the nutritional assessment of novel and GM foods was to be agreed via

correspondence. The guidance will then be considered by SACN before going out to consultation later in the year.

Agenda item 6 – Government updates on nutrition related activities

FSA (SACN/09/17)

31. Dr Alison Tedstone gave an update of FSA activities highlighting in particular the following points:

- *Dietary survey of infants and young children* - the Agency is planning pilot field work which will commence once the contract is in place.
- *Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey (LIDNS)* – following SACN's comments, a position paper on the LIDNS survey has been published on the Committee website.
- *FSA Nutrition Research Review* – The results of the nutrition research review consultation which concluded in May 2009 will be considered by the panel at their meeting on 11th June 2009.
- *Nutrition and Health Claims* – A Commission working paper is being refined for formal consultation. The Agency plans to adopt the European Commission list of approved health claims.
- *Saturated Fat and Energy Intake Programme* – The Agency plan to develop voluntary recommendations on saturated fat reductions for a number of products and single serve portion size availability. The programme is nearing the evaluation stage which is expected to begin in the summer of 2009.

32. Members made general comments on the new format of the update, pointing out that it is easier to read and the Committee requested greater detail in the evaluation column.

DH (SACN/09/18)

33. Dr Sheela Reddy gave an update of DH activities highlighting in the particular the following points:

- *The National Child Measurement Programme* – The information gathered is being fed back to parents for them to take action as they see fit. The Department of Health is keen to take this work forward, despite some objections to children being labelled as obese or overweight.
- *Health Inequalities Funding* – The Department of Health plan to publish the web-based version of the Breastfeeding commissioning guidance in July 2009.
- *The UK WHO Growth Charts* were received very well by health professionals during the piloting phase and training has been provided to health professionals by The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

Devolved Health Departments (SACN/09/19)**Northern Ireland**

34. Dr Naresh Chada gave an update on activities in Northern Ireland, highlighting in particular the *Fit Futures* work initiative and the work of the *Obesity Prevention Steering Group (OPSG)*.

Wales

35. Maureen Howell gave an update on activities in Wales, highlighting in particular the National Programme to Support Breastfeeding in Wales, the *Food in Hospitals, Training and Climbing Higher: Creating an Active Wales* initiative.

Scotland

36. Dr Fiona Bissett was not in attendance to give an update on the activities in Scotland. A written update was made available.

EFSA (SACN/09/20)

37. No update was received.

38. The Chair took the opportunity to thank all those who complete the updates on behalf of the Committee after SACN received a compliment from the Chief Scientist for being the only Committee to request updates.

ANITA THOMAS LEFT THE MEETING**AOB****Possible Horizon Scanning agenda items**

39. Members suggested the following items as possible discussion topics:

- Social science;
- The health of women of reproductive age;
- An evaluation of the Committees influence;
- The implications of strategic reviews on SACN risk assessments; and
- The emergence of systems biology.

40. It was also recommended that Members table a two page paper on where they anticipate a need for the Committee to produce a risk assessment.

Next meeting

41. The next meeting will be held on 1st October 2009 and a Horizon Scanning meeting will take place on 2nd October 2009 at Aviation House.

Meeting close

Questions from external attendees

42. Melanie Ruffell from the Food and Drink Federation queried whether the Carbohydrates Working Group plan to consider EFSA's recent figures on sugar.

43. Dr Alison Tedstone gave thanks for the suggestion and pointed out that the Working Group plan to look at these figures, with particular attention given to sugar and the relation with oral health.

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