

Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

Paper for discussion: Horizon Scanning Workshop and Work Programme 18-19 September 2003

Agenda item: 10

Please see attached paper for discussion.

- Members are invited to agree that the attached paper is a fair record of the discussion.
- Members are requested to agree the attached work programme.

Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

RECORD OF HORIZON SCANNING WORKSHOP & WORK PROGRAMME

- A Horizon Scanning Workshop was held on the 18-19 September 2003 in Cambridge. The meeting was attended by all SACN members and government officials (FSA and DH secretariats to SACN and observers).
- The aims of the workshop were to:
 - identify nutrition issues of importance to public health;
 - identify the need for risk assessment of these issues; and
 - prioritise issues for action.
- Members, health departments and the FSA prior to the meeting had provided items for discussion.

Background

- The Chair discussed issues surrounding the issues of health, ill health and food availability and their interaction. It was noted that SACN, in their approach to risk assessment, considered these when determining the relationship of diets, foods or nutrients to health or ill health. The involvement of health professional in risk communication and the problems around the communication of nutritional messages to consumers and barriers and facilitators to dietary change were considered.
- The Secretariat outlined findings from the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) 2000/1 on the current nutrient intake and status of the adult population. Progress towards a range of nutritional recommendations set out by COMA was discussed. The nutritional status of subgroups of the population (children, adolescents and the elderly) were also considered. Current FSA and DH activity in relation to diet and disease reduction were outlined.

General Issues Discussed

- A broad discussion of the general issues surrounding nutritional risk assessment took place. The issues covered included:
 - the need for accurate information to enable informed opinion;
 - the need for the correct framework, 'the right set of tools', to address issues;
 - whether to take a nutrient or food based approach to issues;
 - current activity in relation to suggested areas;

- the need to communicate with health professionals involved in risk management;
- ability to reflect on effectiveness and implementation of SACN recommendations (and opportunity for future horizon scanning events to also include retrospective assessment of work);
- the responsibility of SACN to assess wider issues, such as alcohol;
- responsibility of SACN to bring to attention where research, surveys, changes in dietary patterns and /or food sources raise concerns about low dietary intakes (eg selenium).

Detailed Discussion Areas

- The topics discussed in detail were:
 - DRVs;
 - vulnerable groups;
 - achievement of dietary recommendations and behaviour change;
 - ill health (locomotor function, immune function, neural function and obesity).
- During the discussions consideration was given to the importance of each topic and the focus and approach of any risk assessment.
- It was agreed that Committee would consider the inclusion of risk assessments related to these topics into its future work programme at a subsequent SACN meeting.

Short Term Issues of Interest

- Two topics were considered for inclusion in the SACN work programme in 2004. These were:

Folic Acid

- It was noted that issue of fortification of flour with folic acid is currently with Ministers. FSA have already advised against fortification. However, evidence is still awaited from countries that have already fortified in terms of health benefits and risks. It was agreed that a paper to be prepared by Secretariat for next meeting outlining current activity and research since 2000.

Trans Fatty Acids

- It was noted that manufacturers were taking on board the issue of reducing trans fats. It was agreed not to include a specific risk assessment on trans fatty acids in the 2004 work programme of the Committee. Any actions should be taken in relation to the broader activity with the review of DRVs.

The Role of SACN

- There was a general discussion concerning the role of SACN and how it interacted with Health Departments, FSA, and other Committees and organisations.

SACN : CURRENT WORK PROGRAMME

SUBGROUPS	AGENCY/DEPARTMENT	TARGET DATE OF FINAL MEETING
Working Group on Iron	FSA/DH	March 2004
Fish	FSA	March 2004
Vitamin A	FSA	March 2004
Nutritional Assessment of Novel Foods	FSA	June 2004
Maternal and Child Nutrition	DH	Ongoing

SACN : PLANNED WORK PROGRAMME

Item	Origin Of Issue	Time Frame
Folic Acid evidence assessment – need for risk assessment	DH/SACN	2004
DRVs - Framework for considering evidence for each nutrient	SACN	2004
DRVs for energy	DH/FSA	2004

SACN : OTHER WORK AREAS IDENTIFIED

Ill Health		
Locomotor function –falls fractures, bone health	SACN	
Immune function-allergy and infant infection, children and the elderly	SACN	
Neural function – dyslexia, Alzheimers, dementia	SACN	
Obesity-metabolic syndrome, intervention messages, glyceamic control, definition in childhood	SACN	Await publication from Royal college of Physicians and Royal Collage Paediatrics and Child Health
Achieving dietary recommendations	SACN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination of research and mapping of NDNS data and dietary recommendations. • Ongoing research on food choice and behaviour.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Await LIDNS results(3-5yrs)
Vulnerable groups and environmental factors e.g. ethnicity, diabetes & women of reproductive age	SACN	Await LIDNS results. Define groups.
DRVs for Macronutrients – Protein, Fat, Carbohydrates	SACN	2005-6
DRVs for Micronutrients – Magnesium, Potassium, Selenium, Folate, Vitamin C, Copper	SACN	