



Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

20TH MEETING

7th February 2007, Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London WC2B 6NH

Final Minutes

Chairman	Professor Alan Jackson
Members	Professor Peter Aggett Professor Annie Anderson Professor John Cummings Dr Paul Haggarty Professor Tim Key Professor Peter Kopelman Professor Ian Macdonald Dr David Mela Dr Ann Prentice Dr Anita Thomas Mrs Stella Walsh Dr Anthony Williams
Government Observers and other attendees	Mrs Rosemary Hignett (FSA) Dr Fiona Bissett (Scottish Executive) Mrs Maureen Howell (Welsh Assembly) Mr Noel Griffin (FSA) Ms Rachel Akinson (DH) Mrs Gill Fine (FSA)
Secretariat	Dr Alison Tedstone (FSA) Ms Lynda Harrop (FSA) Mr Matt Lynch (FSA) Ms Rachel Coomber (DH)

Agenda item 1 – Chair's welcome

1. The Chair welcomed members to the twentieth meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) and welcomed Dr Fiona Bissett who replaces Lesley Wilkie as observer from the Scottish Executive.
2. Apologies were received from Professors Christine Williams and Sheila Bingham and from Mrs Christine Gratus and Dr Sheela Reddy (DH).

- Members were invited to declare any changes of interest. Professor Annie Anderson declared that she receives funding from GlaxoSmithKline

Agenda Item 1 – Minutes of main Committee meeting (11 October 2006) (SACN/06/min/04)

- Members were invited to comment on the minutes of the meeting on 11 October 2006 (SACN/06/min/04).
- The minutes were agreed as a correct record of the SACN meeting on 11 October 2006.

Matters Arising Action Check List (SACN/07/01)

- The Chair reported progress on matters arising from previous meetings. Members were invited to comment.

SACN/05/05 – Agriculture and the link with Food and Health

- Secretariat to begin trawling for a date for a workshop to be held later in 2007.

Action: Secretariat

SACN/05/40 – Review of data on carbohydrates

- The Chair confirmed that a workshop to scope for policy terms of reference has been arranged for 5th March. Numbers are limited, however interested Members could attend on a first come first serve basis.

Action: Members and secretariat

SACN/06/16, SACN/06/17, SACN/06/18 – Nutritional health of the population report, Further analysis on National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) 19-64 years, NDNS Synthesis paper

9. The Secretariat confirmed that these papers were nearing finalisation and would be brought to the next meeting for final agreement.

SACN/06/20 – Update on Nutrition and Health Claims legislation

10. An update on this legislation would be provided under agenda item 2.

SACN/06/22 – UK wide consideration of health issues

11. Secretariat agreed to collect views from members

Action: Secretariat

SACN/06/22 – Funding for nutrition related activities

12. The Secretariat agreed to discuss the best way forward to present this information with the Scottish Executive.

Action: Secretariat

SACN/06/26 – Folate report

13. The Chair reminded Members that the report had been published on 12th December 2006, alongside an FSA consultation on risk management.
14. There was some concern amongst Members that the options presented in the consultation package did not fully reflect SACN's recommendation for mandatory fortification with the proviso for controls on voluntary fortification.
15. Rosemary Hignett explained that it was necessary for the options to remain the same as those agreed by the Board in April 2006. However, SACN's recommendation would be re-iterated at a Board briefing and also in the paper presented to the Board. The Agency is also planning a Board workshop, which would reiterate SACN's position on mandatory and voluntary fortification.
16. Members were reminded of the timetable for the policy process. The consultation was due to close on 13th March 2007 and the Board would meet to discuss the issue in open session on 17th May 2007.

SACN/06/27 – Vitamin D paper

17. This paper would be presented under agenda item 6.

SACN/06/29 – Selenium and health paper

18. Members were informed that this paper was nearing completion and the final version would be circulated prior to publication on the website under the 'position papers' section.

19. The issue of how to alert health professionals to SACN reports was raised. There was a suggestion that a short article or editorial could be published in a peer reviewed journal. The health departments confirmed that such papers were included in the CMO updates. It was agreed that a standard approach was needed and the Secretariat agreed to consider this.

Action: Secretariat

SACN/06/32 – Vouchers under Healthy Start scheme

20. The Chair informed Members that women under 18 years of age did receive vouchers under the Healthy Start scheme.

Agenda item 2 – Update on Nutrition and Health Claims legislation (SACN/07/10)

21. The Chair welcomed Noel Griffin from the FSA who introduced the paper and reminded Members of the background.

22. The Committee welcomed the Agency's lead in establishing standards for the complicated process of approving claims.

23. However, there was concern relating to the substantiation of claims on the authorised list. Members requested the opportunity to comment on the authorised claims list in order to judge the basis on which claims were being made. Members

were also concerned about the 'lighter touch' approach, which had been adopted by the Agency in order to encourage industry to submit claims prior to the January 2008 deadline. They felt that this might lead to claims being submitted without sufficient or appropriate scientific substantiation.

24. JHCI and PASSCLAIM were cited as 'gold' standards for authorising claims. Members were in agreement that a stringent approach was preferable to one that risked unsubstantiated claims being allowed on to the market. It was noted that the food industry also wished to see a higher standard for substantiation of claims.

25. There was uncertainty about the comparator for claims on breast milk substitutes and whether breast milk substitute claims might be covered by PARNUTS legislation. Noel Griffin confirmed that the Agency is currently clarifying how such claims would be taken into account with the Commission.

26. The Chair concluded the discussion by recognising that the Committee wished to play a part in assessing the list of approved claims in order to provide security in assessment. Rosemary Hignett from the FSA agreed to give consideration about how Members could be involved and would report back to the Committee in due course.

Action: Secretariat

Agenda item 3 – Committee openness and FOI Act (SACN/07/02)

27. The Chair introduced this item, which was last discussed in October 2005, and invited Members to comment on the opportunity to move towards greater Committee openness.

28. Members felt strongly about the importance of free and open discussion and raised concerns that if members of the public were present it might hinder discussions.

29. However, there was no clear rationale for the current system of having one open and two closed meetings and it was therefore agreed that the Committee would now hold all of its meetings in open session. This would be subject to review and

the issue of when to allow observers to ask questions would need further consideration. In addition, Members would be consulted about agenda items prior to meetings so they could identify any particularly difficult or contentious issues, which might warrant closed session discussion. There was some discussion about how improved public access might be achieved (e.g. improvements in website layout, earlier posting of papers). It was agreed that this would need further consideration.

Action: Secretariat

Agenda item 4 – SACN horizon scanning process

30. The Chair explained that this item had been put on to the agenda for Members to discuss how they preferred to handle horizon scanning (HS) activities. The Chair presented Members with three options: to continue with the current process of holding HS meetings as separate, two-day events; to hold HS meetings in conjunction with main SACN meetings; or to include HS as a standing item on the agenda of each main meeting.

31. There was general consensus from Members that HS activities are important but that it was not necessary to have them as separate meetings. Members agreed that extending a main meeting by one extra day to accommodate HS was seen as a good use of time.

32. The question of holding SACN meetings outside London was raised although this would have cost implications it would therefore need further consideration.

Action: Secretariat

33. It was agreed that for this year HS would be arranged to coincide with the October meeting provided that enough members were able to attend.

Action: Secretariat

DR ANITA THOMAS LEFT THE MEETING

Agenda item 5 – Draft report on WHO Growth Standards (SACN/07/03)

34. The Chair of the SMCN subgroup introduced this paper, which had been prepared by the joint SACN/Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) working group. Members were reminded that RCPCH had previously had deliberations to move from UK references to WHO standards and that the Department of Health has asked SACN for an opinion on the relevance of WHO standards to growth monitoring and population surveillance in the UK. This paper captures the discussions which resulted in a common statement representing professional and scientific considerations of adopting the WHO standards. Members were reminded that this paper is confidential.
35. Members commended the working group on the paper and the following comments were clarified:
- Members sought clarification of the term “one centile space”. Dr Anthony Williams informed Members that the nine centile curves on a UK1990 chart were placed 0.67 standard deviations apart, so that the term “one centile space” is equivalent to a Z-score of 0.67. A footnote was requested to clarify this.
 - Members felt that the most logical approach was a disjunction at 2 years as there is a natural change in the way infants are measured at this age – from length to height measurements. It was noted that discrepancies are less marked at the ages of 3 and 4 years so disjunctions at these ages may cause additional problems.
 - Members suggested using UK breastfed data would be preferable to MGRS data for monitoring children’s growth in the UK. However, it was noted that at present, the quality of data on UK breastfed infants is not robust enough to base growth standards on. The purpose of the report was to evaluate whether WHO standards are better than what we are currently using. The advantage of WHO charts is they more reliably depict growth of breastfed babies in the UK than the chart in use at present.

- Members asked how the WHO charts apply to babies fed infant formula only. It was suggested it might be useful to quantify divergence of exclusively formula fed babies from the WHO standard if the UK data allowed.

36. Members were informed that a consultation was planned and the paper would then be published. Members were asked to consider whether the impact of change is considered acceptable and to send in comments to the Secretariat.

Action: Members

Agenda item 6 – Vitamin D paper (SACN/07/04)

37. Dr Ann Prentice introduced the paper in the absence of Sheela Reddy explaining that it had undergone substantial changes and has therefore been brought before the Committee once more.

38. Members considered that the recommendation for supplements was somewhat inconsistent with the work that had been carried out on folic acid which resulted in a recommendation for mandatory fortification. The Chair explained that in this case a full risk assessment had not been carried out as with folic acid and this was one of the objectives of the paper – to identify whether there is a need for a full risk assessment.

39. Members commented that there was an inappropriate emphasis on supplementation throughout the review and the use of “supplementation and fortification” was suggested.

40. A point was raised about the need to find a functional marker for vitamin D deficiency in order to take into account physiological changes. It was noted that cut-off values which were too high might lead to an overestimation of the problem of deficiency.

41. It was noted that a short section to cover the effect of renal function should be included.

42. The situation for children in Scotland required clarification.
43. Some clarification was requested on the use of RNI's and whether it was sufficient for those people most at risk, and in particular babies born to severely deficient mothers. Dr Anthony Williams agreed to come up with some wording to clarify this point.

Action: Anthony Williams

44. Members requested clarification of the form of vitamin D supplementation. Vitamin D supplements are not recommended in the form of cod liver oil due to the issue of vitamin A and the risk of teratogenicity with high intakes of vitamin A in pregnant women.
45. Members requested confirmation about whether a risk assessment on vitamin D would be considered in the future and a statement to be included to this effect. The UK are under pressure to review the DRVs and there is a risk that the UK DRVs are falling behind the rest of the world. The Secretariat will trawl for opinions on the need to do a full risk assessment on vitamin D.

Action: Secretariat

Agenda item 7 – Working group and subgroup updates

Maternal and Child Nutrition (SMCN)

46. The Chair of the sub group explained that the activity of SMCN has already been covered by the previous discussion on the Growth Standards paper. This has been the focus of the work of SMCN over the past few months along with members of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH).
47. Members were informed that the next meeting on 21st March might be cancelled as the main items for the group, the Growth Standards and Vitamin D paper had been discussed at this meeting and now needed to be revised before being discussed again.

Energy

48. The Chair of the subgroup informed the Committee that at the last meeting on 5th December there had been a useful discussion on measuring physical activity energy expenditure (PAEE), in particular the use of accelerometers and doubly labelled water (DLW). The issue of underreporting in the NDNS would be discussed at the next meeting in on 24th April. It was considered that a draft report would be produced by the end of the year.

Iron

49. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the work on the iron report has now been reactivated, following publication of the folate report. It was expected that a draft report would be published for consultation by the end of the year.

Approaches to the Nutritional Assessment of Novel Foods (ANANF)

50. The Committee were informed that the meeting in November 2006 had been cancelled due to Secretariat resource issues. However, following the appointment of an external consultant, the work of this group was now progressing.

Agenda item 8 – Government update on nutrition related activities

FSA (SACN/07/05)

51. Mrs Rosemary Hignett for FSA highlighted some key areas in the paper:

- The third phase of the salt campaign was due to be launched later this year.
- A new research call had been published which included a requirement for research on analytical methods for assessment of folate status. Members were informed that this was a direct result of the work that had been carried out by SACN on folic acid.

52. It was queried whether the NDNS rolling programme would be in place in time to monitor any change in policy on folic acid fortification. It was confirmed that this

would depend on the decision that was taken regarding fortification and the process that followed.

53. Members sought clarification on the review of the design and use of the nutrient profile model. Rosemary Hignett confirmed that there would be a consultation to review the model and although timescales had not yet been decided SACN would be involved in the process of a review.

54. Members requested the opportunity to comment on the LIDNS report once the draft was complete.

Action: Secretariat

DH (SACN/07/06)

55. Ms Rachel Atkinson for DH presented the paper highlighting the following points:

- Although the database from the weighing and measuring programme was flawed and is not good enough to perform detailed analysis at a national level, there is potential for some of this data to be used at a local level. The weighing and measuring programme is intended to continue.
- OfCOM will make an announcement shortly about further television restrictions on food and drink advertising. The focus is now shifting to what will happen in non-broadcast.
- Healthy Start was successfully launched in November 2006 and there has been a great deal of positive feedback. Vitamin supplements are now available for children and supplements for mothers will be available in March.
- Members were informed that the 5 A DAY programme was a great success and that new research was to be launched around criteria for composite foods.

56. It was confirmed that there would be a follow-up evaluation of the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme, available in April.

57. It was noted that conclusions of the WHO conference on obesity had been omitted from the update. Members requested a report that would conclude this work.

Action: Secretariat

58. Members were under the impression that the process with OfCOM was complete. Rachel clarified that OfCOM had published further proposals in November 2006. They launched a short consultation, which proposed extending the age range for scheduling restrictions from all children's programming and programmes of particular appeal to children from 4-9 years to children aged 4-15 years. Industry is campaigning for OfCOM to review the use of the FSA's nutrient profiling model citing discrepancies in the model's application such as its failure to take account of positive nutrients and its 100g basis.

Devolved Health Departments (SACN/07/07)

Wales

59. Mrs Maureen Howell for the Welsh Assembly presented the paper. Further detail was requested on the Breast Feeding Support Grant Scheme and it was clarified that this scheme was managed by a breast-feeding coordinator and it would be evaluated in due course.

Scottish Executive

60. Dr Fiona Bissett for the Scottish Executive presented the paper and asked if Members required further clarification on any of the areas raised.

62. There was a general discussion about monitoring and evaluation of all the schemes mentioned in the government updates. Members were concerned that evaluation of schemes was not always complete and wished to have the opportunity to comment on them. This was considered important to ensure that lessons learnt were being taken forward in the development of future schemes. It was suggested that all the initiatives could be put together so they could be easily compared and any gaps could be identified. The Secretariat agreed to consider the best way for taking this forward.

Action: Secretariat

63. There was a query about co-ordination of nutrition policy between FSA Scotland (FSAS) and the Scottish Executive. The Scottish Executive work in partnership with

FSAS on Diet and Nutrition policy through complementary policy documents; Eating for Health - Meeting the challenge (2004) and the FSA strategic plan 2005-2010 (2005).

Action: Secretariat

Northern Ireland

64. Members noted the report.

EFSA (SACN/07/08) and DEFRA (SACN/07/09)

65. Members noted the reports.

AOB

Nutrition Professionals Confederation (NPC)

66. The Chair updated the Committee on the status of this group following a meeting in January and reminded Members of the background. In 2004 a coalition of health professionals had sent a letter to the Minister with a signed statement of their position on role of nutrition and health professions in the delivery of health and nutrition services.

67. Confirmation of support for this group had now been received from the Department of Health and NPC members were now charged with considering whether the letter represented the views of the key organisations involved.

68. A meeting would be held in the summer to consider next steps and it is expected that the business of this group will be completed within the year.

Committee process

69. The Chair mentioned that there were a number of issues relating to process, including some that had been raised by Members during the appraisals. These important considerations would be collected and discussed at a future meeting.

Action: Secretariat

Close

70. Members were reminded that the horizon scanning meeting in February had been cancelled so the next meeting would be the open meeting on 6th June 2007 at Aviation House.

71. The Chair thanked Members for their attendance and closed the meeting.