

Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

Subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition (SMCN)

Paper for discussion: MRC and WHO Systematic Review on Low Birth Weight

Agenda item: 1

Please see attached paper for discussion.

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Review of the evidence on the influence of maternal and child nutrition on development of disease in later life

Issue

1. Review of the evidence on the influence of maternal and child nutrition on development of disease in later life.

Background

2. At the SACN meeting dated 3 October 2002 it was agreed that the subgroup would:
 - review the evidence on the influence of maternal and child nutrition including growth and development *in utero* and early childhood on the development of disease later in life.
 - identify opportunities for effective nutritional intervention that could influence the risk of disease later in life.
3. MRC is also undertaking a major review titled *Prevention of adult disease through interventions in early life: a systematic review to define optimal infant growth*

The aims of the review are :

- To systematically assess and collate the scientific evidence and lay perspectives on infant growth with a view to determining whether optimal patterns of infant growth can be defined (NB it is not assumed that a single pattern of infant growth will be found to be 'optimal').
- To identify gaps in the evidence, to assess the implications of those gaps and make recommendations for addressing the gaps.
- To develop a testable intervention to prevent adult disease by optimising infant growth **and/or** to recommend a policy change (and evaluation) to achieve this **or** to recommend no change.

The MRC review is due to be completed at the end of 2003.

4. The secretariat has also been made aware that a similar review is being considered by WHO. Details of this review are not available at present.

5. In light of the two impending reviews addressing similar issues and the likely overlap of topics being addressed, it is suggested that the subgroup should consider postponing the SACN review at the present time. Members will be requested to revisit the issue at a later date.

Action

Members are requested to agree to defer the SACN review.

