



Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

**3rd MEETING OF THE SUBGROUP ON MATERNAL AND CHILD
NUTRITION**

**15th September 04, Department of Health,
Skipton House, 80 London Road, SE1 6LH**

MINUTES

Attendees:

Dr Anthony Williams (Chair)
Professor Peter Aggett
Dr Ann Prentice
Mrs Stella Walsh
Professor Annie Anderson

Observers

Maureen Howell (Wales)

Secretariat

Dr Sheela Reddy (DH)
Dr Alison Tedstone (FSA)
Mrs Parminder Nijjar (DH)

Dr Christopher Owen (consultant)

Chair's Introduction

1. The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting.

Apologies for absence

2. Apologies were received from Professor Alan Jackson, Dr Timothy Key, Dr Naresh Chada (NI) and Dr Lesley Wilkie (Scotland).

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Minutes of last meeting

3. Members were invited to comment on the minutes of the previous meeting (29 September 2003).

4. It was agreed to amend last sentence of paragraph 24 to read “The question in general goes beyond risks associated with introduction of pathogens and issues such as delayed introduction of gluten *and development of immunotolerance*”.

5. It was agreed to amend paragraph 26 as follows: *“Based on evidence available, Members were unable to identify any significant risk associated with delaying the introduction of complementary feeding to 6 months in bottle fed infants.*

6. Members were interested to know if Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency had reviewed the product *Dalivit* in the light of its vitamin A content. They were informed DH was still awaiting a response and Secretariat will chase MHRA.

7. Pending these amendments, the minutes were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

Action: Secretariat

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Early nutrition and the development of disease in later life

8. The Chairman introduced Dr Christopher Owen, employed by the Department as a consultant, to work on the project for 12 weeks. Currently, he works as a non-clinical epidemiologist at St. George’s Hospital. He has spent approximately 80% of his funded time working on this project and has primarily focussed on the impact of early nutrition and growth on the development of cardiovascular disease.

9. The Chairman briefly outlined the draft report and reminded members that outline contents of the report were presented to SACN in January this year. Few changes were made following their comments, though dental health outcomes were added at the request of one member.

10. Members were asked to comment on the draft report particularly:

- scope – in addition to cardiovascular disease, should the report also review bone health, dental health, cancers and psychosocial outcomes?
- balance between the presentation and discussion of animal and human studies.
- aspects omitted.

11. Members were informed that further funding could be made available to work on this project. Members were also directed to the tabled comments received from Professor Tim Key. The draft report and its conclusions were discussed.

12. Members praised the report and considered it well written and of high standard. In response to Chairman’s request for comments, members expressed the need to include or expand upon the following:

- a glossary.
- clarity on issues related to breastfeeding, bottle feeding and mixed feeding, particularly definitions of these terms.
- characteristics of subjects.
- explicit referencing.
- understanding of mechanisms.

- the roles of metabolic programming/genetic /epigenetic phenomena in establishing glucose tolerance, protein turnover and insulin resistance.
- section 5.2.2 on “Maternal Nutritional Status”.
- critical thinking about new markers, expanding on section 5.2.3 to understand the genetic elements of metabolic markers.
- Clarification of growth differences between breast and bottle fed babies.
- section 5.3 “Early Childhood Growth”.
- last paragraph on page 66 needs clarification.
- relative contributions of the effects of alcohol and smoking.
- more focus on the National Diet and Nutrition Surveys, at the expense of material on Household Food Survey.
- the impact of micronutrient status on birth weight.
- Clarification of table 7.4

13. The Chair asked members to give careful consideration to conclusions and recommendations which might impact on the Department’s future programmes (such as the National Diet and Nutrition Surveys and quinquennial Infant Feeding Survey), and the commissioning of research.

14. The inclusion of dental health was discussed. Members agreed that since caries resulted from a different nutritional exposure other epidemiological approaches may be required. The Secretariat will liaise with Professor Rugg-Gunn on this issue.

15. Bone health was also discussed. Members agreed that sufficient data might be available to undertake a meta-analysis. It was suggested that the Southampton research group be contacted for details. Alternatively, a systematic search could be conducted to trace existing reviews and inform members’ views on the way forward. The Chairman suggested Secretariat might locate another consultant to work on this aspect, due to Dr Owen’s limited availability.

16. Members discussed the inclusion of cancer. The Chairman agreed to contact Professor Martin Wiseman to ascertain the scope of the World Cancer Research Fund’s draft report in this regard.

17. Members agreed that the psychosocial cognitive outcomes would best be dealt with separately, as methodological approaches were different.

18. Members proposed that the influence of early nutrition on development of atopy and respiratory disease should be included in the report.

19. The Chairman suggested that he and Dr Owen amend the draft in line with comments received. This would be circulated to members of the sub-Group by early 2005, aiming to present a complete draft of the sections on cardiovascular disease to the February meeting of SACN.

20. In response to the Chairman’s proposal the Secretariat agreed it would review the likely burden of work required to include the additional outcomes discussed by members. The sub-Group and SACN would then be able to consider whether this

work would be better published as a single report or as several related to specific outcomes.

21. The Secretariat will liaise with Professor Alan Jackson for his comments on the draft report.

Action : Secretariat / Dr C. Owen and Chairman to update the draft report.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Vitamin D / NICE

22. The Chairman reminded members that the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has published antenatal care guidelines stating that vitamin D supplementation should not be offered routinely to pregnant women. Their statement was based on an opinion that there is insufficient evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of vitamin D in pregnancy.

23. The Secretariat had raised concerns of SACN members with NICE which is considered unlikely to revisit this issue and alter its statement. In the light of rising professional concern about vitamin D deficiency amongst young infants, the Department proposes to reiterate through regular communications such as the *CMO's Update* existing advice to health professionals on the importance of meeting the RNI set for pregnancy and the consequent need to consume vitamin D supplements during pregnancy. Similar action was taken earlier this year on the use of soya formula. This was well received and heightened awareness among the health professionals. Members supported this course of action.

24. Members noted the clear conflict between NICE's guideline and existing Department of Health policy. They were of the view NICE had taken too narrow a view in examining only data from controlled trials and had not considered the implications of the existing DRV. They agreed that the Guidelines should state "*Vitamin D should be offered routinely*" and requested that the Secretariat continue to pursue this at the highest level.

25. Members were informed that under *Healthy Start*, the Department will be reviewing the composition of Vitamin D supplements for pregnant women. It will be tendering for reformulation of vitamin supplements for pregnant and breastfeeding women to include vitamin D, and folic acid. Members noted that most supplements available in the market were in conjunction with calcium and other vitamins. They emphasised the need for vitamin D supplements suitable for use during pregnancy.

26. Members highlighted the need to state that the DRV applies to all healthy pregnant and lactating women and suggested that information should include a list of available supplements.

Action: Secretariat

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Childhood Obesity – Food Advertising in Context Report by OFCOM

27. The Secretariat explained to members the background to the OFCOM report on “*Childhood Obesity – Food Advertising in Context*”. They were invited to comment on the report.

28. Members found the report of interest but based on a market research rather than scientific approach.

29. Members were informed that OFCOM needs to consult on conclusions of the review before any changes are made to the rules on advertising. This will be done in the context of White Paper and the nutrient profiling exercise currently being undertaken by the FSA. SACN will have another opportunity to comment on this report when it is open for formal consultation.

Action: Secretariat

AGENDA ITEM 5 – DH Update on Activities related to Maternal and Child Nutrition

30. Members were invited to comment on the paper.

31. In response to the queries raised members were informed of the following:

- the Department continues to liaise with the *Baby Friendly Initiative* (BFI) on issues related to infant nutrition. It has invited BFI to comment on the Resource pack which will be launched in Autumn 2004.
- the *Healthy Start* regulations are currently being drafted. The scheme is expected to be phased in during 2005.
- work on the *Infant Feeding Survey 2005* has commenced. About four to five organisations have expressed interest in carrying out this survey. Currently, specifications have been drawn up and are being finalised. They will be circulated to selected members for their comment.
- the *National School Fruit Scheme* has been renamed the *School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme*. Evaluation of the Scheme is currently underway. Post-intervention measurements are being made and a report is expected in February 2005. The evaluation includes both qualitative and quantitative aspects. Dietary measurements are being made using tools developed by Dr Janet Cade, University of Leeds.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – FSA Update on Activities related to Maternal and Child Nutrition

32. Members were invited to comment on the paper.

33. In response to queries, Members were informed of the following:

- the cooking bus funded by the Agency is operated on the basis of booking by individual schools.
- Members were not clear which initiatives were led by FSA in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Members were informed that the Directors meet and discuss the Agency's work in detail and cascade information on all the current activities. In addition, the Secretariat co-ordinate updates separately for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland for the main SACN meetings.

Update on Activities related to Nutrition – Welsh Assembly

34. The Chairman invited Maureen Howell to provide an update on the Welsh Assembly Initiatives related to Child and Maternal nutrition

35. In response to Chairman's request, Maureen Howell informed the members on the following:

- The *Wales Breastfeeding Strategy* was launched eighteen months ago. A child health database has been set up to collect data on initiation and continuation of breastfeeding. The UNICEF *Baby Friendly Initiative* programme has been adopted by all hospitals in Wales and to date 5 have achieved the award.
- The *Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes* is a network of local schemes between health and education. Co-ordinators help schools to identify what they need to do to become healthier and help them to implement action. Many of the schools look at nutrition and undertake such activities as establishing fruit tuck shops, school nutrition action groups, pupils working with caterers to develop healthy packed lunches etc.
- The *Primary School Free Breakfast Initiative* started on a pilot basis starting in Communities First areas of 9 local authorities in September. All the remaining local authority areas will be given opportunity to participate in the second phase of this initiative from September 2005. New schools will be added each term until January 2007. This initiative was intended to improve the health and concentration of pupils, to assist in the raising of standards of learning and attainment. An evaluation has been commissioned. Draft guidance has been produced for the pilot:
www.learning.wales.gov.uk/breakfast/guidance-e.htm

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36. Members were informed that the draft report on "*Early Nutrition and Development of Disease in Later Life*" will be progressed through emails. Members were asked to send comments to the Secretariat, who will then relay them to Dr Christopher Owen.

37. Secretariat will trawl dates for future meetings.

Action: Secretariat