

Costa Rica: Progress and challenges to reduce salt consumption

Adriana Blanco-Metzler

Meeting of the Regional Expert Group, Countries
and Partners

**“Cardiovascular disease prevention through
dietary salt reduction”**



PAHO WDC-October 27-28, 2011



Outline

- Introduction
- Background
- Progress
- Challenges



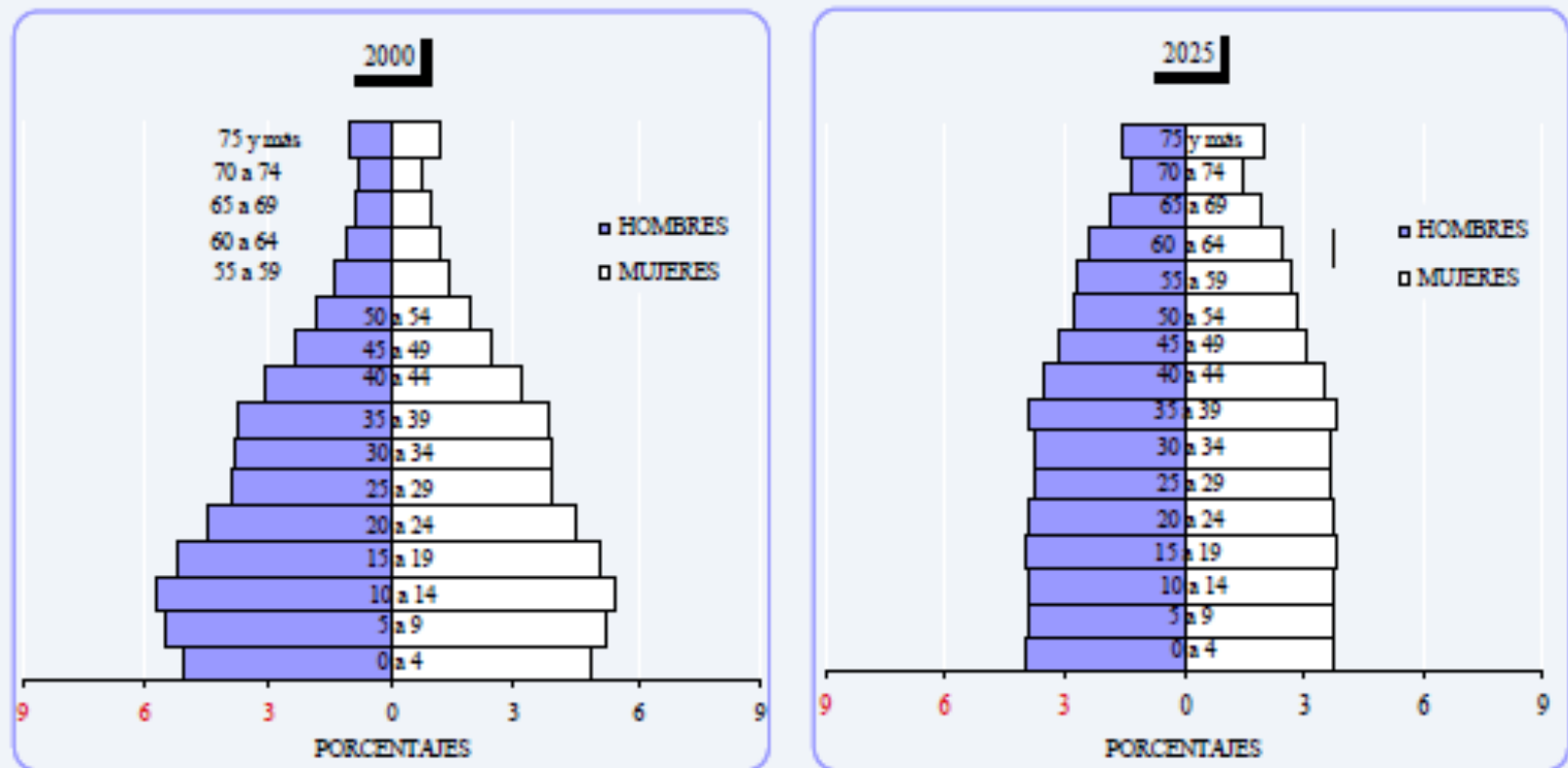
Introduction



Demographic indicators

- Total population: 4 563 539 (2010)
- General mortality rate: 4.1/ 1000 (2019)
- Main death causes: diseases of circulatory system
cancer
- Total fertility rate: 1.82 (2009)
- Poor households: 21.3%
- Literacy rate: 95.2% (2000)
- Human Development Index (HDI): 0.85 (2007)
- Social security coverage: universal
- Source : <http://www.inec.go.cr/Web/Home/pagPrincipal.aspx>

Distribution of population by gender and year age groups

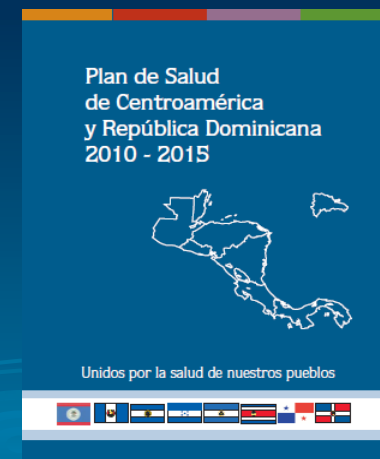


Fuente: Censos Nacionales 1950, 1984, 2000, Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos.

Proyecciones y Estimaciones de Población, 1995 - 2025, Programa Centroamericano de Población, UCR, y Área de Estadística y Censos, MEIC, 1998.

Background

- Salt (domestic) consumption 7 g/person/day
- Salt fortification program, since 1972
- 37,8% hypertension (31,5% diagnosed and 6,3% undiagnosed) & 26,8% pre-hypertension.
- Plan of Health for Central America countries and Dominican Republic



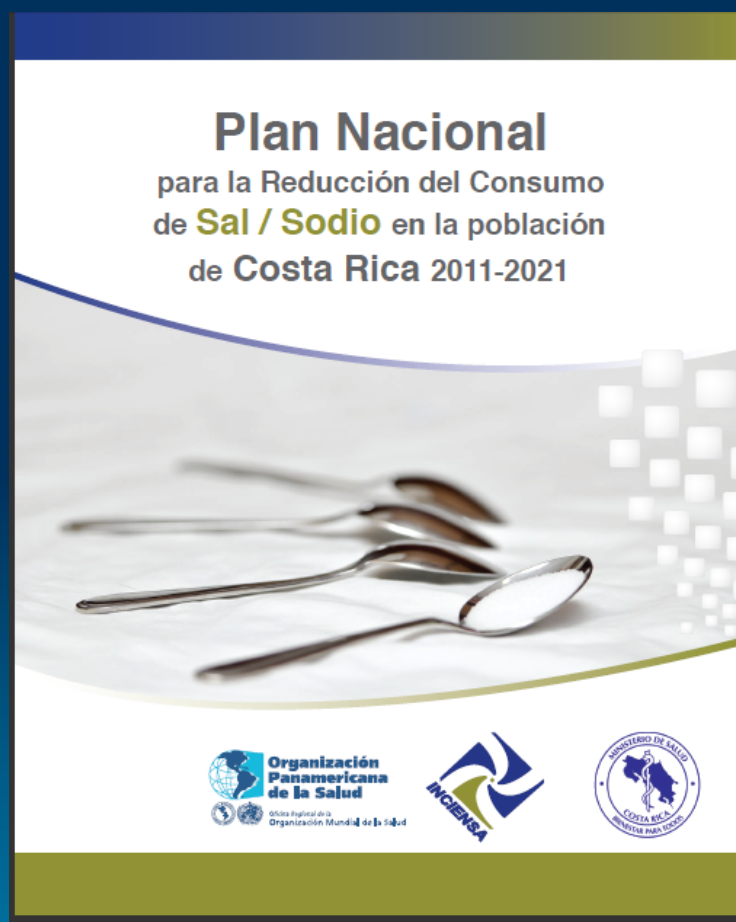
Progress



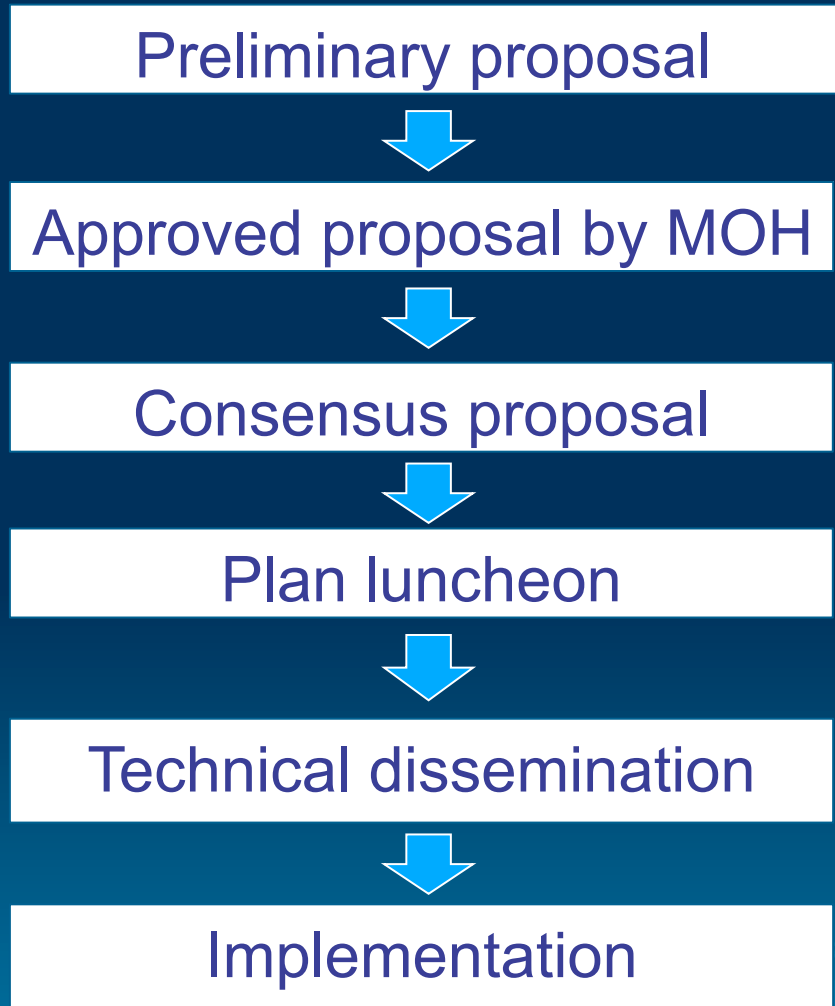
National Policy and Plan on Food Security & Nutrition, 2011-2021



National Plan to Reduce the Intake of Salt/ Sodium for the Population of Costa Rica 2011-2021



Steps to prepare and implement the National Plan



Internal validation

External validation


General objective

To contribute to the reduction of morbidity and mortality due to hypertension and CVD in Costa Rica, by reducing salt in foods consumed by the population, to achieve progressively the WHO recommendation (5 g salt or 2 g sodium/person/day)

Specific objectives

1. To know the national situation regarding sodium intake, food sources, its content in most consumed foods and increased knowledge, attitudes and consumer behavior.
2. To implement strategies in coordination with the food industry and food services to reduce sodium/salt in processed and prepared foods.

Specific objectives

3. To promote behavior change of excessive consumption of salt, in the population's diet through a social marketing plan and training.
 4. To monitor and evaluate actions to reduce salt/ sodium in the population.
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Commitments to support the Policy Statement on Dietary Salt Reduction



Costa Rican Medical Association



Ministry of Health of Costa Rica



Latin American Network on Food Data Systems, FAO/UNU

Research

- Survey on data of sodium in processed and prepared foods of Latin America, 2011. (LATINFOODS)

Conclusions:

1. Strong interest to assess the sodium content of foods and working with PAHO programs to reduce dietary salt consumption.
2. Up to date, in the region is needed information on the sodium content of foods, as well as economical resources to generate data.

Research

- Multi-center collaborative study sponsored by PAHO/WHO, 2011-2012. Knowledge, perceptions and behaviors in relation to the sodium salt and food, its association with health and nutrition labeling of foods.
- Determination of sodium content in breads and snacks commonly consumed in Costa Rica (INCIENSA, ITCR, PAHO)

Research

- International collaborative project to compare and monitor the nutritional composition of processed foods (George Institute, INCIENSA)
- Pilot study: Population Level Sodium Determination in 24 Hour Urine Samples
- Concept note IDRC: Implementation of a population-wide program to reduce salt/sodium consumption in Costa Rica (INCIENSA, ITCR, U. Toronto, USP, George Institute, PAHO/INCAP)

Food regulation

- *Codex Alimentarius* Sodium/Salt Electronic Working Group
- Advisory Technical Commission for Nutritional Value of Foods



Clinical

- Detection, diagnose and treatment guidelines for hypertension, 2010 (CCSS, INCIENSA)
- Surveillance of cardiovascular risk factors, 2011 (CCSS)

Dissemination and memberships

- PAHO Web seminar, 2011
- 9 IFDC, 2011
- Publications (scientific, virtual site, media)
- Joined WASH, 2010

Challenges

1. Implementation of the National Plan
2. Inter-institutional coordination of strategic actors
3. Negotiation and collaboration of the food industry
4. Funds (internal and external)

