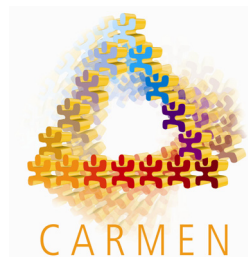




Salt Experts Steering Committee Teleconference Meeting

(14 January 2010)



Agenda

1. Introduction and update on overall progress
2. Progress reports from working group chairs
 - i. Advocacy/Communications
 - ii. Surveillance
 - iii. Industry/Product Reformulation
 - iv. Fortification
3. Global initiatives that impact the Region
4. Summary of next steps
5. Other business
6. Next meeting

Participants

Norm Campbell, Francesco Cappuccio, Beatriz Champagne, Omar Dary, Ruben Grajeda, Branka Legetic, Barbara Legowski (notes), Ricardo Uauy, Godfrey Xuereb

Introduction and Progress Update

Norm Campbell and Branka Legetic

Working groups and secretariat have made good progress. The policy statement has been launched; PAHO has a website for the initiative that includes an endorsement process and fact sheets, and the PAHO Regional Director is being given a letter to sign asking for endorsements. While there are a number of endorsements now, largely thanks to Norm and Beatriz, we need to encourage/mobilize other group members to seek endorsement from their respective organizations and others in their networks.

Adriana Blanco has influenced the decision that the salt reduction be included in the health plan for Central America and the Dominican Republic Health.

Advocacy and Communications

Beatriz Champagne

The working group has had a very good start. A draft plan will be reviewed. Early awareness is the starting point, and the earned media campaigns (no charge) can be used. The working group will decide on audiences, messages, and methods. The fact sheets should be reviewed for appropriate literacy level and the full expert group needs to be notified and mobilized to circulate the advocacy and communications materials available.

The LANCET is considering publication of the policy statement; and the *Journal of the World Heart Federation* (CVD Prevention and Control) will publish the statement and background.

Other members of the Expert group should be reminded to follow and submit the policy statement for publication in journals devoted to their technical area, to ensure its visibility among different communities.

World Salt Day (during the week of 2-9 February 2010) will focus on the non-hypertensive adverse effects of high-salt diets. Graham McGregor is responsible for media releases, and materials have already been developed. PAHO and all group members should work on dissemination.

Surveillance

Francesco Cappuccio

The working group thoroughly reviewed possible or already-planned surveys in the Caribbean, Argentina, Chile, and Mexico. The most advanced protocol involving 24 hour urine collection is ready for roll-out in Barbados. With some modification (e.g. using creatinine excretion rather than PABA administration), the Barbados approach will be proposed as starting point for development of the minimum standard protocol for the Region at the next meeting of the surveillance group, to be held in Mexico on 11-12 March 2010 and hosted by the Institute for Public Health in Cuernavaca and the Salvador Zubirán National Medical Science and Nutrition Institute. The extent to which protocols and surveys to determine salt intake and iodine can be harmonized will also be discussed in Mexico.

Industry

Branka Legetic Reporting for Ricardo Uauy

An outcome of the Partners' Forum (PF) held in D.C. in November, relevant to the salt initiative, is a working group of public, private and NGO sector participants to address healthy nutrition with dietary salt as a priority, to work through three subgroups for communication, reformulation and research/surveillance. Their facilitator has been informed that the three subgroups correspond to working groups of the Salt Experts initiative and that there needs to be coordination between the two initiatives to avoid duplication of efforts. B. Champagne will work with the PF subgroup facilitator on operating criteria for their communications subgroup. A representative of the Salt Expert Group should become involved in the subgroup for surveillance and reformulation.

The baseline on industry to serve for reformulation activities will be obtained through a questionnaire developed during the December meeting, when the areas of interest will be determined and the questionnaire finalized.

The European Salt Action Network (ESAN) has been active in the area of reformulation, and the Canadian Sodium Working Group is also in the process of developing targets and timelines with industry. Communication and sharing of any useful resources among the groups working with industry is essential.

Fortification

Omar Dary

O. Dary and R. Grajeda will prepare a concept paper (combining reduction in salt intake with iodine fortification, to allay fears of incompatibility) that will serve as a basis for a small planning

meeting between UICDD, UNICEF, and PAHO/WHO—preferably initiated by PAHO—to analyze and adjust recommendations and indicators for iodine intake for the Region. The concept paper will provide an excellent resource at the upcoming meeting in Geneva on 22-26 February 2010, where the nutrition guidelines will be revisited on salt as a vehicle for iodine. This and small planning meeting above mentioned with main actors will serve to prepare WHO third platform event, planned for June 2010, where agreement will be sought for new global guidelines for iodine fortification.

Global Initiatives Update

Godfrey Xuereb

- Three platforms involving WHO Geneva and other regions.
 - ✓ Meeting in London on 16-18 March 2010 on “enabling environments” will include a forum with industry and NGOs on reformulation and consumer information, a meeting with experts from WHO-Euro Member States.
 - ✓ Meeting to be tentatively hosted by Canada in October 2010 on monitoring and evaluation process and tools, with the aim of reaching a global consensus on salt intake tools and missing data on food composition, including sodium.
 - ✓ Working with the Nutrition unit from WHO-Geneva, UN partners, and NGOs on how to harmonize iodine intake with reduced salt intake (as stated above under Fortification) will be the subject of a third platform meeting tentatively scheduled for June 2010.
- New initiative emerging in the Western Pacific region with support from the Singapore health promotion agency. The first meeting is planned for June 2010, where PAHO and the WHO-Euro network models will provide useful input for the start-up of the Western Pacific initiative.
- By the end of 2010, WHO-Geneva intends to have made available a package for Member States on dietary salt reduction. The Assistant Director for CNCs and mental health in Geneva wants the package to include evidence that dietary salt reduction is cost-effective.

Summary and Next Steps

- Advocacy and Communications Group
 - ✓ Coordinate with *World Salt Day* preparations.
 - ✓ Finalize the advocacy/communications plan.
 - ✓ Check literacy level in fact sheets.
 - ✓ Encourage all members to seek endorsements.
 - ✓ Work on coalition building by subregion.
- Surveillance Group
 - ✓ Prepare for a minimum standard protocol to be finalized in Mexico.
- Industry
 - ✓ Secretariat to develop the draft questionnaire to determine industry reformulation baseline.
 - ✓ F. Cappuccio to forward relevant materials from FSA to secretariat to facilitate dealing with industry.
 - ✓ Select the representative to Partners’ Forum subgroup for industry reformulation.
- Fortification
 - ✓ O. Dary and R. Grajeda to develop the concept paper harmonizing dietary salt reduction with iodine supplementation.

Next Teleconference Meetings

- Two, one at the end of March (the 31st) and another at the end of April (the 30th).