

EUPHA Section on Food and Nutrition

PRE-CONFERENCE on WEDNESDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2016, Vienna, Austria

Pricing of Food: can we use this to promote healthy nutrition?

Consumers' choice of food consumption and nutrition behaviour are influenced by multiple factors, including food availability, and food price.

In order to promote and encourage healthy food consumption, some countries have legislated to enable them to influence the price of certain foods, e.g. through the introduction of taxes and subsidies aiming to improve populations' eating behaviours.

This pre-conference therefore aims to reflect upon these issues by focusing on regulation and food pricing for public health purposes, including both subsidies and taxes.

The primary objectives are to:

- (1) examine and share experiences about the effects of food pricing on health and health equality in Europe;
- (2) discuss the food pricing strategies to promote healthy nutrition; and
- (3) discuss and explore future strategies for regulation and policies to influence food pricing.

The presentations will explore the effects of food pricing on healthy nutrition and obesity prevalence rates, and on health equalities and inequalities.

Fee

The fee for participation in this pre-conference is €70 (lunch included).

Programme

**This event will be chaired by Natalie Rangelov and Enni Mertanen,
both Vice-Presidents of the EUPHA Section on Food and Nutrition**

- 13:30 **Welcome and introduction**
- 13:50 **The impact of food tax in different socioeconomic status**
Dr. Éva Martos
- 14:10 **Regulation of food pricing to promote healthier nutrition**
Ms. Anthia Zammit, LL.B, LL.D
- 14:30 **Effects of food taxation on obesity and other health outcomes – results of three
Cochrane reviews**
Dr. Stefan Lhachimi
- 14:50 Coffee break
- 15:20 **Public health initiatives to modify the nutritional quality of foods and food intake in
France**
Dr. Chantal Julia
- 15:40 **Sustainable foods and better health: a topic for food price strategies?**
Dr. Elisabeth H.M. Temme
- 16:00 **General discussion, taking account of all presentations and topics raised throughout
the day**
- 17:00 **Closing of the pre-conference**

ABSTRACTS

Abstract 1

- a) **Title:** The impact of food tax in different socioeconomic status
- b) **Presenting author:** Éva Martos
- c) **Presenting author's e-mail:** drmartoseva@gmail.com
- d) **Abstract:**

In Hungary, the Public Health Product Tax (PHPT) entered into force in September 2011 with the aims to reduce the consumption of food products that are not useful from a public health point of view and to promote healthy diet. The second impact assessment of PHPT took place in 2014 with the support of WHO Regional Office for Europe, as part of the National Diet and Nutritional Status Survey (OTÁP 2014) that was conducted by the National Institute for Food and Nutritional Science. Based on the results it seems, depending on the product group, 16-28% of PHPT product consumers have changed their consumption due to the introduction of the PHPT.

Socioeconomic status had a strong influence also on consumption change. Compared to the higher education group, twice as many people with primary education have changed their consumption, but this meant changing to another brand of the product or choosing a cheaper alternative. Education did not influence reduced consumption, while health literacy was not prominent among people with primary education. The proportion of those who consume PHPT products on a daily basis is much higher among people with primary education compared to those with higher education. In the case of sugary soft drinks, the difference is nine-fold. Awareness about the PHPT and the products was also different by educational attainment. Those with primary education were less likely to know about them.

With targeted health literacy related initiatives and other policies the impact of the food tax may be further expanded in a wider range of population groups, especially those with lower education levels. In order to reach those, local, targeted, awareness raising and educational programs as well as other complementary measures would be necessary. Consideration should also be given to the introduction of targeted price subsidy for healthy food products such as fruit and vegetables.

Abstract 2

- a) **Title:** Regulation of food pricing to promote healthier nutrition
- b) **Presenting author:** Anthia Zammit
- c) **Presenting author's e-mail:** info@anthiazammit.com
- e) **Abstract:**

It is estimated that by 2030, two thirds of the world's population will live in cities. Nutrition, global food security, and food affordability constitute an intrinsic part of public health in the European Region and beyond. Food safety, security, and pricing dynamically shape global healthcare systems, and determine countries' social and economic development.

Healthy nutrition and diet is thought to depend less on individual choice, and more on food availability and affordability. This presentation would explore European food and nutrition legislation, WHO guidelines, and policies encompassing health; agriculture; biotechnology; food processing; manufacturing; global trade; import; export; transport and logistics; retailing; and marketing.

Cross-border coordination in food and nutrition pricing could be based, to some degree, on European pharmaceutical product pricing to enhance public health and health equality. This presentation will also explore the economic basis of food and nutrition legislation, and public health costs of nutritional deficiency. It shall aim to demonstrate the need for action by decision-makers and by the community to tackle issues such as homelessness; urban design; paediatric nutrition; food quality; food safety; production sustainability; and agricultural policy.

Abstract 3

- a) **Title:** Effects of food taxation on obesity and other health outcomes – results from three Cochrane reviews
- b) **Presenting author:** Stefan Lhachimi
- c) **Presenting author's e-mail:** Stefan.Lhachimi@uni-bremen.de
- f) **Abstract:**

The World Health Assembly and the WHO in their global strategy on diet, physical activity and health stated explicitly that prices influence consumption choices and that public policies can influence prices through taxation, in ways that encourage healthy eating. We will present preliminary results of three Cochrane reviews on the taxation of certain food item to curb obesity. Our reviews focus on the effects of governmental taxation on (i) processed or packaged food with high content of saturated fat, (ii) sugar sweetened beverages, and (iii) unprocessed sugar or sugar-added foods.

We will consider evidence from various sources for this review with respect to the quality of the study design and adapt a similar approach previously done by at least two other Cochrane reviews in order to summarize 'best available evidence' (Gruen 2004; Turley 2013). This approach clearly separates studies into two broad categories: (1) studies meeting rigorous EPOC criteria and (2) studies not meeting EPOC criteria with less quality and internal as well as external generalizability.

Our outcome selection and grouping was guided by preliminary evidence, on the basis of a logic model, and on the feedback from review advisory board members. Primary outcomes include intermediate non-health related outcomes directly affected by tax-induced changes in food prices. As a result, consumption and energy intake may directly alter primary health outcomes overweight and obesity. Secondary outcomes will focus on food patterns (substitution and diet), expenditures, and other health outcomes directly or indirectly influenced by taxation of saturated fat/total fat/sugar content. We included demand as proxy for consumption.

Abstract 4

- a) **Title:** Public health initiatives to modify the nutritional quality of foods and food intake in France
- b) **Presenting author:** Chantal Julia
- c) **Presenting author's e-mail:** c.julia@uren.smbh.univ-paris13.fr
- d) **Abstract:**

Since 2001, France has engaged in a public health program aiming at improving health through nutrition in the population, the Nutrition and Health Program (Programme National Nutrition et Santé, PNNS). The PNNS combines complementary and consistent measures, regulations and laws. Among the various regulations at work in the PNNS, some aim at modifying the food offer.

In January 2012, an excise tax on sweetened beverages was implemented nationally. The tax included both sweetened and artificially sweetened beverages. The tax was found to be favourably perceived in the population (57.7% were supportive of the tax in a research study), and socio-demographic characteristics were associated with tax perception. Some data suggests that the excise tax was shifted differently on prices according to types of brand, retailers' brands increasing more importantly the prices of their goods than national brands. Finally, sales of soft drinks have shown a slight decrease whereas those of fruit juices have somehow increased.

These encouraging results have prompted for more public health interventions in this field. In January 2014, a report to the Health Minister proposed the introduction of three novel regulations of the food offer based on the nutrient profiling of foods: labelling, advertising regulation and taxation. More specifically, the taxation was proposed to be progressive, based on the overall nutritional quality of the food.

Abstract 5

- a) **Title:** Sustainable foods and better health: a topic for food price strategies?
- b) **Presenting author:** Elisabeth Temme
- c) **Presenting author's e-mail:** liesbeth.temme@rivm.nl
- d) **Abstract:**

Currently European food consumption and production is responsible for an estimated 20-30% of total greenhouse gas emission (GHGE). A 'Western' dietary pattern, high in energy and animal-derived products creates a significant environmental burden as well as adverse public health consequences such as obesity, diabetes, and related costs. We need a better understanding of the link between environmental aspects of food production and consumption and human health. In addition, a more in depth evaluation of potential strategies to guide populations towards consuming a healthier yet environmental sustainable diet is needed. In this meeting we will present the outline of our project as well as some first results.

The aim of this project is to investigate the link between environmental impacts of diets and health outcomes. Specific research questions are: what are the most important contributing foods to environmental impact; what is the association between the environmental impact and health outcomes for current and recommended diets? ; what are preferable dietary changes to lower environmental impacts as well as increased population health?

We use data of an existing epidemiological cohort study: the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC). EPIC was designed to investigate the relationships between diet, nutritional status, lifestyle and the incidence of cancer and other chronic diseases. The study runs in ten European countries, including over half a million participants. The majority of the analyses will be done in the Dutch sub-cohort. For one part of the analysis we envisage extension to other EU parts of the cohort. EPIC-NL is coordinated jointly by the RIVM and the University Medical Centre Utrecht. EPIC-NL includes 40,000 subjects recruited during 1993-1997, and 16 yr morbidity/mortality follow-up. Dietary assessments are via food-frequency questionnaires. Dietary data will be enriched with data on selected environmental aspects such as GHGE and land use for food products for the Dutch (already available) and possibly other parts of the cohort. Environmental data are based on Life Cycle Analysis (LCA). For an (to be selected) intervention scenario (option for change), we perform a societal cost-benefit analysis (SCBA) involving a systematic identification and valuation (in monetary terms) of all consequences (advantages and disadvantages) of certain policy options to direct our population towards environmentally friendly and healthy diets.

Our findings will add to the challenge of creating a sustainable society. We aim to contribute to a better scientific understanding of the environmental impact of diets and relationships with health. In addition, we will be able to give evidence-based advice on health and sustainability issues of food policies.