

WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health: current status

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Key topics addressed

- National strategies and guidelines on diet and PA
- National food and agriculture policies pricing, food programmes
- Multi-sectoral actions
- Building prevention into health services
- Surveillance, research and evaluation
- Institutional capacity

The Global Strategy – current status

- Executive Board approved Resolution with condition: comment period for countries until 29 February
- Over 50 submissions from Member States www.who.int/hpr/gd.strategy.country.shtm
- Comments considered, Strategy revised, circulated 19 April
- Strategy and Resolution will be presented to WHA57, 17-24 May 2004, Geneva

Controversial issues

- Scientific basis - TRS 916 and more
- Reference to specific nutrients and foods
- Individual vs government responsibility
- Implications for agricultural sector - sugar
- Neglect of under-nutrition
- Pricing policies (e.g. taxes, subsidies)
- Marketing to children
- Role of industry
- Other agencies (FAO)

Evidence base is secure

- Economic costs of chronic diseases intolerable
- Causes known - range of studies, disciplines, all regions
- Interventions required for individuals and populations
- Interventions available, being used and working
- Comprehensive policies required to support behaviour changes
- Multi-sectoral approach

Sugar – a trade issue

Major focus of criticism from some member states:

10% of energy as upper limit of intake is evidence based (TRS 916)

IOM report misinterpreted

Impact on poor producing countries – 'most policy-distorted of all commodities'

Balance between individual and government responsibilities

Two views:

1. Diet and physical activity under individual (family) control
2. Governments have an important role in shaping individual choices

Advertising, marketing and prices

- Influence on children supported by recent reports (UK FSA)
- All are important determinants of consumption.
- GS makes general statements
- Issues remain contentious

So how does the new version differ?

- Spirit and intent strengthened
- TRS 916 now referenced in the Report from the Secretariat
- Under nutrition emphasised
- Individual and government roles strengthened
- Working with UN partners emphasised
- Physical activity strengthened
- Many minor modifications

Summary

- Strategy requested by MS
- Strong evidence base
- Adopts a menu approach - non binding
- Implementation the key
- Implications for economies and agriculture need further work - not necessarily negative

Global Strategy implementation will...

- Spread the benefits of public health knowledge
- Lead to large and sustained improvements in population health
- The economic benefits likely to be large
- Likely positive implications for health services