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26 August 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Draft Carbohydrates and Health Report – consultation response**

I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to this review of evidence on Carbohydrates and Health prepared by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN). I chose obesity as the subject for my recent Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for Cardiff and Vale (2013)<sup>i</sup>, as I believe it is amenable to change. In Cardiff and Vale over half our adult population is overweight or obese (54%). The Wales Childhood Measurement Programme 2012/13<sup>ii</sup> shows that 26% of reception age children in Wales (4/5 years) are overweight or obese.

Based on the above evidence and that considered by the WHO draft guideline for sugars intake for adults and children (WHO 2014), I agree with the following recommendations that the SACN make:

- That the UK should adopt the definition of free sugars (all monosaccharides and disaccharides added to foods by the manufacturer, cook or consumer, plus sugars naturally present in honey, syrups and unsweetened fruit juices).
- The Dietary Reference Value (DRV) for free sugars should be set at a population average of around 5% of dietary energy from 2 years of age.

However, the recommendation on sugar-sweetened beverages could be enhanced to state:

- The consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages should be **restricted** in both children and adults **and replaced by milk and water**.

Setting the DRV for free sugars to no more than 5% of total energy intake means that current mean intakes in all groups would be at least twice the DRV and three times the DRV in the 11-18 year age group. Removing sugar sweetened beverages from the diet (as these provided 30% of non-milk extrinsic sugar intake in the 11-18 year age group and 16% of

intake in adults and young children) would contribute significantly towards meeting this target.

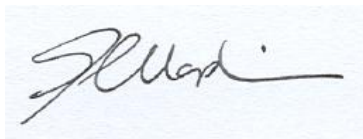
In addition, I would like to suggest that:

- The UK government should help to curb consumption of processed foods through:
  - Taxation and health warnings on sugary drinks.
  - A ban on advertising of junk food advertising before 9pm.
  - Working with the food and drinks industry to ensure that products have healthier formulations and incentivise healthier products.
  - Reaching agreement on a universal food traffic light system.
  - The use of mandatory, visible calorie counts in fast food outlets and restaurants.
- This report should consider the impact of dietary sugars which are “hidden” in processed foods, not traditionally associated as sweet e.g. white bread.
- There is further research to establish whether there is an association between total or individual sugar intake and type 2 diabetes.

I hope this SACN review will provide the evidence and momentum for the action at an institutional and organisational level that is required to generate a “movement” to change the populations’ unhealthy relationship with processed and sugar containing foods. Government policy needs to be bolder to support real food and food standards that promote good health.

I will follow the progress of this report with great interest.

Yours faithfully



**Dr. Sharon Hopkins**  
**Executive Director of Public Health**  
**Cardiff and Vale UHB**

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<sup>i</sup> Obesity the Bigger Picture (2014) Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for Cardiff and Vale 2013. Available at: <http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/opendoc/244119>

<sup>ii</sup> Childhood Measurement Programme Report 2012/2013 (2014) Public Health Wales. Available at: <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/888/11762%20PHWO%20Child%20Measure%20lo.pdf>