

Scientific consultation: draft SACN Carbohydrates and Health report -

June 2014 Response from Angela Madden PhD RD & Katerina Vafeiadou PhD MSc on behalf of the Nutrition & Dietetics Group, University of Hertfordshire 7 August 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Carbohydrate and Health report. We commend SACN for undertaking this work and providing a robust evaluation of the published literature.

Overall, we support the following recommendations: 50% energy from carbohydrate and 30 g fibre using AOAC method.

We welcome the use of the term 'free sugars' as it is more accessible for consumers than non-milk extrinsic sugars. In order to evaluate intakes, data on free sugars need to be available in UK food tables and we hope this is included in the 7th edition of the McCance & Widdowson's The Composition of Food which is due for publication very soon (6th edition only has total sugars and individual sugars). If not, then we suggest SACN gives guidance about what to use for evaluation and implementation and we urge discussion between SACN and the Royal Society of Chemistry for future editions.

We support the recommendation that an average of 5% of energy should come from free sugars in the population on the basis of the evidence included in the report. However, in view of current intake, we also recognise the challenge that this presents to consumers, the food industry and health professionals who will play a role in trying to implement the guidance.

We note the lack of evidence of the effect of resistance starch on mineral absorption (Table 9.1). We cannot find other comment on the effect of dietary fibre on mineral absorption and raise the question about whether this should be considered in view of the recommended increase in fibre.

We suggest the following ideas for future research recommendations:

- Evaluation of the effect of fiscal measures on free sugar consumption using both consumer and health economic approaches, e.g. using model used in Netherlands (Waterlander 2014 Appetite)
- Exploration of the need for a practical and easily understood scheme for consumers to use to assess their free sugar intake, e.g. comparable with five-a-day for fruit and vegetables, and if needed, subsequent implementation and evaluation
- In view of SACN's recommendation to consume dietary fibre from sources including pulses, an investigation of both the gastrointestinal effects (or perceived effects) of pulses which might deter consumers from eating them and the potential cooking or processing that might ameliorate these and help promote consumption of pulses.

Finally, it would be very helpful for practitioners and students if SACN were to publish a brief hard copy summary of the dietary reference values, i.e. to include 2011 energy and 2014 carbohydrate values in an updated version of the 1991 'grey book'. Large downloadable PDF documents are extremely useful but are not practical in many situations.