CALL FOR EVIDENCE

Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition - review of evidence for the relationship between saturated fats and health

In response to a request from the Food Standards Agency (Scotland) in 2014 (now Food Standards Scotland) to review the dietary recommendations for fat, in particular saturated fats, and in recognition of public controversy around the effects of fats on health, SACN has convened a working group to review the evidence in this area. The terms of reference for the group and the agendas and papers for the first two meetings are available on the SACN website.

Evidence to be considered by the working group

We have undertaken a systematic literature search to identify relevant studies that have been published since the 1991 and 1994 COMA\(^1\),\(^2\) reports. Only the highest quality evidence will be considered, in line with SACN’s Framework for the Evaluation of Evidence.

Inclusion criteria

- Systematic reviews, meta-analyses and pooled analyses of randomized controlled trials and prospective cohort studies examining the relationship between dietary saturated fats and key intermediate risk factors and health outcomes (outlined in Annex 1 of this document)
- Published between 1990 and the present
- Peer-reviewed papers published in scientific or medical journals; English language studies; no geographical restriction.

Exclusion criteria

- Any type of study that does not meet the inclusion criteria (e.g. primary research studies; systematic reviews/meta-analyses of case-control or cross-sectional studies)
- Published abstracts; grey literature such as dissertations; conference proceedings; magazine articles; books / book chapters; opinion pieces; information from websites; reports and other non-peer reviewed articles.

What you are invited to do

Annex 2 of this document lists the studies we have identified through our literature search. You are invited to make us aware of studies satisfying the inclusion and exclusion criteria set out above and which are not listed in Annex 2.

Citations to published studies should be emailed to sacn@phe.gov.uk by 15 June. At this time, we will not consider any other types of submission.

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ANNEX 1: INTERMEDIATE RISK FACTORS AND HEALTH OUTCOMES

Below are a list of the intermediate risk factors and health outcomes the Saturated Fats Working Group agreed to look for evidence on.

**Intermediate risk factors**: blood pressure, blood lipids (total cholesterol, low density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL), high density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, total: HDL cholesterol ratio, triacylglycerols), insulin resistance, weight/BMI status, waist circumference, energy intake;

**Health outcomes**: total mortality, cardiovascular morbidity (coronary heart disease, stroke and peripheral vascular disease), cardiovascular mortality, incident diabetes, cancer incidence for selected common cancers (breast, colorectal, lung, pancreatic and prostate cancers), cognitive decline/dementia and incident liver disease (non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) and non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH));

**Maternal- and infant-specific outcomes**: preeclampsia, intrauterine growth restriction, small-for-gestational-age, gestational diabetes and post-partum weight loss.
ANNEX 2: STUDIES IDENTIFIED THROUGH OUR LITERATURE SEARCH

Embase, Medline, Cochrane and Scopus databases were searched for relevant systematic reviews and meta-analyses. After de-duplication, 997 publications were identified. Of these, 35 publications were considered to be relevant and have been included in the list below. Where the online database search identified a number of versions of a systematic review or meta-analysis, the most up to date version has been included.


