How to set up national sodium targets using global sodium benchmarks

Martijn Noort - Wageningen University & Research, The Netherlands

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6 May 2024, WHO webinar on global benchmarks (2nd edition)

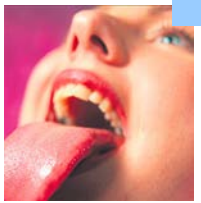
Sodium functionalities in foods

- Multiple functionalities, which vary per food group/product.

PROCESSING & PRODUCT QUALITY

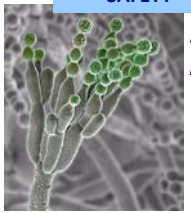
Physical properties of proteins, gluten strength
Affects dough processability and bread quality
Regulates fermentation, chemical leavening

TASTE PERCEPTION



Salty taste, overall taste enhancement, masking off-tastes

SHELF LIFE & SAFETY

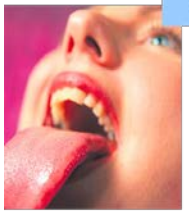


Preservative against microbial growth

PROCESSING & PRODUCT QUALITY

Enhances water holding of proteins and yield
Control pH
Regulates fermentation

TASTE PERCEPTION



Salty taste, overall taste enhancement, masking off-tastes

SHELF LIFE & SAFETY

Preservative against microbial growth

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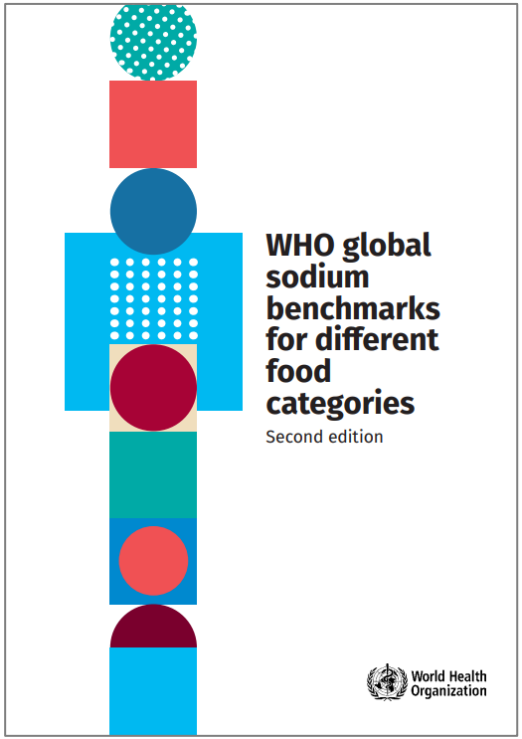
WHO global sodium benchmarks

- Global benchmark levels are **feasible maximum sodium levels** for broad food categories on global level.
- Maximum limits covering a wide range of key food categories (70 subcategories).
- **Exceptions** will occur for specific food types that need a more considered maximum sodium limit to ensure food quality and safety.
- Global benchmarks provide a good starting point for setting up national sodium targets.



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5 Key steps to adapt the global benchmarks

1. **Collect data** and determine the contribution of processed foods to overall sodium intake and which categories of processed food contribute to it.

2. **Determine which key food categories to target** e.g. main contributors to sodium intake.

3. Collect product-level data and analyse **what products are included in selected categories and their sodium levels.**

istock@Gurzzza

5 Key steps to adapt the global benchmarks

4. **Set targets and timeline:**
   - **Review** the global benchmarks compared to collected data; apply corresponding global benchmark values as target levels**.** Adjust food categories as needed and set target levels as appropriate.
   - **Set the timeline** taking into account the country's overall sodium reduction goals. Consider taking a stepwise approach and setting interim targets.
   - **Assess technical feasibility** of targets and timeline through scientific evidence and consultations with key stakeholders.

5. **Develop plans for monitoring, evaluation and updating the targets over time** (e.g. increasing food subcategories to target, reducing the target levels once sodium reduction has been achieved).

istock@SurfUpVector

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Adaptation of the global sodium benchmarks (step 4)

- Global benchmarks are established for general and wide food categories to represent all foods around the world. So not every product can be well covered by the food subcategories of the global benchmarks.
- In some cases, countries need to tailor the targets to ensure they are suitable for their local market situation.
- The sodium content of specific foods can vary due to many factors such as geography, food culture, taste preferences, traditions, manufacturing techniques and practices, product reformulation efforts, technology available, and other food and nutrition policies in place.

istock@colematt

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Adaptation of the global sodium benchmarks (step 4)

- If some important products cannot meet the targets, it is advised to split the subcategory and/or modify the subcategory definition.
- It is important to make sure each subcategory is well defined so that the targets are achievable but still challenging for all product types covered by the subcategory.

istock@Hispanolistic

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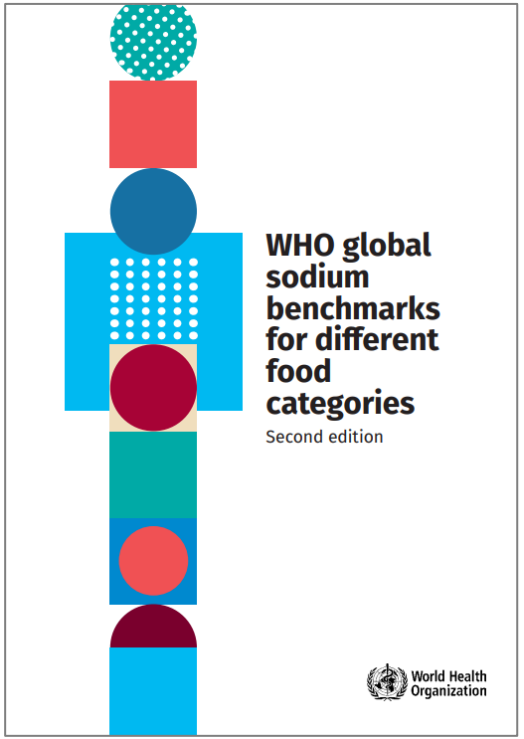
WHO global sodium benchmarks

- Global benchmarks serve as **feasible maximum sodium levels** for broad food categories on global level.
- Global benchmarks provide a good starting point for setting up national sodium targets and reference point for food industry to guide sodium reduction of processed foods.



Questions?

Thank you for your attention

Contact:

Martijn Noort

martijn.noort@wur.nl

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