Consultation on the 2018 review of the UK Nutrient Profiling Model

Introduction

In August 2016, government set out its approach to tackle child obesity in Childhood Obesity, A Plan for Action[1]. A commitment in the plan was to review the existing UK Nutrient Profiling Model (NPM) 2004/5[2], and develop and test options for a new model that reflects current UK dietary recommendations.

The UK NPM 2004/5 was developed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) as a tool to enable the Office of Communications (Ofcom), the broadcast regulator, to identify 'less healthy'[a] foods and drinks so that advertising for such products could be subject to restrictions during children's television programming. Ofcom made the decision to add rules to the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP) Code involving the NPM in 2007 and BCAP and the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) have been using this model for broadcast media since the restrictions came into force in April 2007[3].

In 2007, the UK FSA established an independent review panel to assess the effectiveness of the UK NPM 2004/5 at differentiating foods on the basis of their nutrient profile. In 2009, the FSA Board advised Ministers the UK NPM 2004/5 remained unchanged[4].

In 2016, the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) consulted on whether the UK NPM 2004/5 should be adopted to identify foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) so that advertising for such products could be subject to restrictions in children's non-broadcast media (including print, cinema, online and in social media)[5]. CAP concluded that the UK NPM 2004/5 performed best compared with the EU Pledge Model and the World Health Organization Europe nutrient profiling model. The UK NPM 2004/5 was adopted by CAP. These restrictions came into force in 2017[6].

The UK NPM 2004/5 is over 10 years old and does not reflect current UK dietary recommendations, in particular those for free sugars and fibre[7] set on the advice of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) and accepted by UK health departments.

[a] As defined by the Nutrient Profiling Model technical guidance www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nutrient-profiling-model.

The 2018 review of the UK Nutrient Profiling Model

The scope of the 2018 review of the UK NPM 2004/5 focused on updating the model to reflect the current UK dietary recommendations, in particular those for free sugars and fibre rather than developing a new model from first principles. The approach also considered opportunities for changes to other nutrients/food components included in the UK NPM 2004/5.

The 2018 review of the UK Nutrient Profiling Model included the:

- establishment of an expert group to provide advice and make recommendations to Public Health England (PHE), and a Reference Group to provide practical information and insights to inform decisions about the revision of the UK NPM 2004/5
- consideration of models currently used in other countries, and international organisations
- development of a NPM test dataset containing foods and drinks commonly consumed by children
- development of performance measures to compare outcomes of modifications to the model against the UK NPM 2004/5
- modelling of modifications to the UK NPM 2004/5

The draft 2018 NPM

The UK NPM 2004/5 was modified to ensure the current UK dietary recommendations are incorporated. The differences between the draft 2018 NPM and the UK NPM 2004/5 are:

- the adjustment of the energy criterion in line with food labelling regulation intake of 8,400kJ (2,000kcal) as a result, nutrient components such as saturated fat and sugars were recalculated as a proportion of food/total dietary energy
- the replacement of the total sugars component of the NPM 2004/5 with 5% of total dietary energy for free sugars
- the adjustment of the fibre criterion as a proportional change from the existing UK NPM 2004/5 value to the current UK dietary recommendation for fibre
- the replacement of the sodium criterion with salt

The effective usability of the model continues to be dependent on the use of accurate and reliable compositional data and nutrition labelling data. It may be necessary to produce revised technical guidance to support how this data is derived (including the estimation of free sugars) and subsequently provided to regulators.

Consultation details

The focus of this consultation is on the technical basis for the modifications to the UK NPM 2004/5 in developing a draft 2018 NPM. Specifically, this focuses on its alignment with the current UK dietary recommendations, which recommends average population maximum intakes of free sugars should be no more than 5% of total dietary energy and fibre intakes should increase to 25g/day in children aged 11-16 years and 30g/day in adults.

If the proposed changes to the NPM are accepted by government, there will be further consideration and consultation on its application by broadcast and non-broadcast regulatory bodies.

Public Health England is seeking your views on the draft 2018 Nutrient Profiling Model.

The 2018 review of the UK NPM can be found in **Annex A.** The document was peer reviewed and a summary of reviewer comments and Expert Group responses can be found in **Annex B**.

Full details of the nutrient/food component and scoring of the UK NPM 2004/5 and the draft 2018 NPM can be found in **Annex C**.

Your views/consultation

We are consulting on the 2018 Review of the UK Nutrient Profiling Model for 12 weeks.

The consultation is open from 23 March 2018 at 9.30am and will close on 15 June 2018 at 9:30am.

Public Health England welcomes your views on the modifications made to the UK NPM 2004/5, and the methodology for developing the modifications, in particular with reference to the remit and aims of the review to ensure the NPM reflects the current UK dietary recommendations.

How to respond

Please respond with your comments to the 2018 Review of the UK's Nutrient Profiling Model consultation at
nutrientprofilingmodel@phe.gov.uk

All responses will be published following the conclusion of the consultation.

Annexes

Annex A – The 2018 review of the UK Nutrient Profiling Model

Annex B – Summary of peer reviewer comments and Nutrient Profiling Model expert group responses on the 2018 review of the UK Nutrient Profiling Model

Annex C - Basis of the nutrient/food component and scoring for the UK NPM 2004/5 and the draft 2018 NPM

References

[1] HM Government. Childhood obesity: A plan for action. (2016). Online. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/childhood-obesity-a-plan-for-action (accessed 26/06/17)

[2] Department of Health. The Nutrient Profiling Model. (2011). Online. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nutrient-profiling-model (accessed 24/11/17)

[3] Office of Communications (Ofcom). Ofcom publishes final Statement on the television advertising of food and drink products to children. (2007). Online. Available from: www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/media/media-releases/2007/ofcom-publishes-final-statement-on-the-television-advertising-of-food-and-drink-products-to-children (accessed 26/06/17)

[4] Food Standards Agency. Board Paper - FSA 09/03/06 Review of the Agency's Nutrient Profiling Model. (2009). Online. Available from: webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120413225357/http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/board/fsa090306v2.pdf (accessed 28/11/17)

[5] Committee of Advertising Practice. Food and soft drink advertising to children consultation and regulatory statement (CAP). (2016). Online. Available from: www.asa.org.uk/resource/food-and-soft-drink-advertising-to-children-consultation.html (accessed 25/01/18)

[6] Committee of Advertising Practice. New rules ban the advertising of high fat, salt and sugar food and drink products in children's media. (2016). Online. Available from: www.asa.org.uk/news/new-rules-ban-the-advertising-of-high-fat-salt-and-sugar-food-and-drink-products-in-childrens-media.html (accessed 24/11/17)

[7] Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition. Carbohydrates and Health. (2015). Online. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/sacncarbohydrates-and-health-report (accessed 28/11/17)