The Need: Monitoring New Zealand food environments

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Monitoring Food Environments

• Process questions
  • What progress are governments and food companies making to improve the healthiness of food environments?

• Impact questions
  • How healthy are our food environments? (composition, labelling, marketing, provision, retail, prices)

• Measure, track and compare progress
• Strengthen accountability systems

Research funded by HRC. Symposium co-sponsored by Healthier Lives National Science Challenge
INFORMAS (www.informas.org)

• **International Network for Food and Obesity/ NCD Research, Monitoring and Action Support**
  • INFORMAS is a global network of public-interest organisations and researchers that aims to monitor, benchmark and support public and private sector actions to create healthy food environments and reduce obesity, NCDs and their related inequalities

• **Progress**
  • Phase 1: (2012) frameworks & indicators
  • 14 Foundation papers published, 2013,
  • Phase 2: (2013/4) protocols, pilot testing
  • Phase 3: (from 2015/6) in 30+ countries
INFORMAS module structure

**Public sector policies and actions**

How much progress have (international, national, state and local) governments made towards good practice in improving food environments and implementing obesity/NCDs prevention policies and actions?  
*(University of Auckland)*

**Private sector policies and actions**

How are private sector organisations affecting food environments and influencing obesity/NCDs prevention efforts?  
*(Deakin University)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisations</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Food environments</th>
<th>Impacts</th>
<th>Populations</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Food composition</td>
<td>Food labelling</td>
<td>Population diet</td>
<td>Physiological &amp; metabolic risk factors</td>
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<td><strong>Private</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Food marketing</td>
<td>Food provision</td>
<td>What is the quality of the diet of different population groups? <em>(University of Sao Paulo)</em></td>
<td>What are the burdens of obesity and other risk factors? <em>(WHO)</em></td>
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<td><strong>Food retail</strong></td>
<td><strong>Food prices</strong></td>
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<td>What is the nutrient composition of foods and non-alcoholic beverages? <em>(The George Institute)</em></td>
<td>What health-related labelling is present on foods and non-alcoholic beverages? <em>(University of Oxford)</em></td>
<td>What is the exposure and power of promotion of unhealthy foods and non-alcoholic beverages to different population groups? <em>(University of Wollongong)</em></td>
<td>What is the nutritional quality of foods provided in different settings (e.g. schools, hospitals, workplaces)? <em>(University of Auckland)</em></td>
<td>What is the availability of healthy and unhealthy foods and non-alcoholic beverages in communities and within retail outlets? <em>(University of Auckland)</em></td>
<td>What is the relative price and affordability of ‘less healthy’ compared with ‘healthy’ diets, meals &amp; foods? <em>(Queensland University of Technology)</em></td>
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INFORMAS NZ study

- Funded by HRC
  - 2014-2018
  - 18 modules
  - First comprehensive national survey

- Publications to date
  - 27 peer reviewed articles
  - 4 major reports
  - International comparative studies (4)
  - Summary country scorecard (forthcoming)
Modules for New Zealand

1. Public sector (Food-EPI)
2. Private sector (BIA-Obesity)
3. Composition (Nutritrack)
4. Labelling (Nutritrack)
5. Promotion (to children)
   a. TV
   b. Magazines
   c. Company websites
   d. Company FaceBook pages
   e. Sports club sponsorship
   f. Food packages
   g. In ‘school food zones’
   h. Social media (Facebook)

6. Provision
   a. Schools
   b. Hospitals

7. Retail
   a. In communities
   b. Within store

8. Prices
   a. Foods
   b. Meals
   c. Diets
Public Sector

- **Food-EPI tool** (2014, 2017)
- **Outputs**
  1. Validated evidence base
  2. Implementation gaps
  3. Specified policy options (~45)
  4. Top priorities (7-9)
- **Process**
  - Experts engaged (53 & 71)
  - Independent & government
  - Convergent exercise to agreement
  - Dissemination
  - Benchmarking
Priority recommended actions

1. Food composition
   - Structured reformulation for sugar and sodium
2. Food labelling
   - Fix HSR and make mandatory
3. Marketing to children
   - Regulations needed
4. Food prices
   - 20% tax on sugary drinks
5. Food in schools/ECEs
   - Ensure healthy food
6. Leadership
   - Strengthen child obesity plan
   - Target for reducing child obesity
   - Targets for population intakes for sugar, salt, saturated fat
   - Promote healthy eating guidelines
7. Monitoring
   - New Child Nutrition survey
8. Funding
   - Increase to ~10% of costs of overweight and obesity (~$100m)
Private Sector

• BIA-Obesity tool
• Commitments and transparency only
• ~1/2 companies engaged with the process
• Wide range of scores on commitments (0-75), median 38
• Specific feedback provided
• Phase 2 – performance
Community food retail environment
(>9000 food outlets)

- Food outlets of all types per 10,000 people: high vs low deprivation areas
  - Convenience stores: 12.7 vs 4.5
  - Fast food, takeaway: 13.7 vs 3.7
  - Supermarket, F&V stores: 3.9 vs 1.3
  - More food swamps
Schools

1. Food policies
   - Written 40%
   - Strength 3%
   - Comprehensiveness 16%

2. Selling sugary drinks
   - 40%

3. Fundraising using unhealthy foods
   - 96%

4. Programs +++
   - Giving food, education
DHB food policies

Strength

Comprehensiveness

Research funded by HRC. Symposium co-sponsored by Healthier Lives National Science Challenge
Summary: Food Environments

- Policies and actions from the major players – govt, food industry – are patchy
- Food environments are largely unhealthy
  - Positive example of strong DHB food policies taking hold
  - Changing obesogenic school food is a priority
- Ongoing monitoring is essential for NZ’s largest contributor to health loss