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Sodium content in processed food in major retail outlets in Malaysia

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Abstract

One of the key elements that influence dietary sodium intake is the sodium content of commonly consumed food including processed food. In Malaysia, sodium content is considered as optional nutrient in its food labelling. The objective to this study was to perform a systematic survey of sodium content in processed food in major retail outlets in Malaysia. The data were collected on a sample of processed food that was representative of the majority products available in major retail outlets. A comparison of the sodium contents between food categories was then made. Data collection was based on categories of processed foods that were identified to contribute the most to dietary sodium intake. The food information was sought from the Nutrition Information Panels (NIPS) on product labels in stores. The sodium content, in mg/100g or mg/100mL for liquids, was recorded. The mean sodium content of each group was later compared. The data was further be used to compare between continents and against the maximum targets set by the UK Food Standards Agency 2012 (UKFSA 2012). A total of 728 products were collected for their nutrient information (NIPS). They were sorted according to countries, then grouped into 5 continents and Malaysia. Majority (76.8%) of the products collected were from Malaysia. Out of the products collected 54.5% (397) had no information on sodium (Na). Food subcategory (FSC) with the highest amount of Na was Asian & Indian Flavoured Spices (mean 4878 mg /100g). 32% (14) Food FSCs had sodium content higher than maximum targets by UKFSA; 46% (20) had no mean value for Na. Kruskal Wallis test showed that there was a significant difference between Na/100g of products in the 10-food groups, with D2 (9) = 92.968, ($p < 0.000$) and between Na/100g of products in the five continents and Malaysia, with D2 (4) = 69.094, ($p < 0.000$). However, there was no difference between Na/100 g of products between products of international brands and local brands in Malaysia, with D2 (1) = 0.583, ($p = 0.445$). The quality of NIPS in processed food in Malaysia is not satisfactory. Many of the food items collected did not have complete labelling and some had no NIPS at all. Therefore, further improvements in labelling of processed food items are needed. This will enable the public in general and patients with hypertension in particular to be more vigilant of their daily sodium intake. © 2020, Advanced Scientific Research. All rights reserved.

Author Keywords

Nutrition Information Panels (NIPS); Sodium Content

Index Keywords

carbohydrate, citrate sodium, edible oil, glutamate sodium, guanosine phosphate, monosaccharide, protein, saturated fatty acid, sodium, sodium chloride, sodium nitrate, soybean oil, yoghurt; Article, bread, caloric intake, cereal, coconut milk, cross-sectional study, dairy cream, dietary supplement, energy, fish, food composition, food industry, food packaging, human, hypertension, meat, nutrient intake, nutrition labeling, processed food, protein intake, sodium intake, spice, vegetable

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