

Policies and actions to shift eating patterns: What works?

Appendix 2



Photo: The Argument by Design

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Appendix 2: Methodology

Introduction

This rapid review aimed to address the following question:

“What are the most effective types of interventions to bring about changes in food consumption patterns that achieve co-benefits for planetary and human wellbeing (i.e. that can reduce environmental impact and reduce the incidence of nutrition-related non-communicable diseases)?”

Methodology

The review approach drew upon a number of existing guides to Rapid Evidence Assessments including the ‘Rapid Evidence Tool kit’ provided by the UK government (Civil Service 2014), Harling et al (2015) ‘EPC Methods: An exploration of methods and context for the production of rapid reviews’ and Petticrew Roberts (2006) ‘Systematic Reviews in the Social Sciences: A Practical Guide’.

An adapted ‘Population, Intervention, Comparator and Outcome’ (PICO) approach was applied to break down these research questions into components (Table 1) that best represent the initial scope of the work and to aid further analysis of the available evidence.

Table 1. Draft PICO components of REA questions

Population	Intervention	Comparator	Outcome
Food consumption patterns	Consumer targeted intervention Supply chain Public health policy Tax Incentives	Before and after intervention	(Change in) human wellbeing (nutrition related NCDs) (Change in) environmental impact

Search strategy

Working search terms included but were not limited to the following:

String 1	String 2	String 3	String 4
Food	Consumer	Unhealthy diet	Malnutrition
Diet*	Supply chain	Unsustainable	Health
Consump*	Incentive	(Consumption)	[Environmental impact]
Nutri*	Tax	(Production)	Diabetes
Sustainable	Reward	Overconsumption	Cardiovascular
	Behaviour	Climate	Obesity
	Attitude	Greenhouse gas	Climate
	Social	GHG	Greenhouse gas
	Com*	Water	GHG
	Work place	Water pol*	Water
	Citizen	Soil degrad*	Cancer
	Trade	land degrad*	Non-communicable OR noncommunicable
	Trading	Land*	
	Ban	Biodiv*	
	Reformul*	Energy	
	Regul*	Carbon	
	Legis*		
	Nudge		
	Fiscal		
	Marketing		
	Choice edit*		
	Choice archit*		
	Social marketing		
	Settings		
	Health promotion		
	Policy		
	Prevention		
	Labelling		
	Education		
	Inform*		

These individual terms were then used to construct a number of search terms using wild cards and the Boolean AND OR operators. Each researcher conducted searches using specific terms and recorded these strings using reference management software.

Given the high number of papers that the focused searches on health generated an initial decision was taken to restrict the results from these searches to papers published between 2010 and 2015. The environmental literature was not restricted to a specific time period. However it should be noted that a number of the papers included in this selection were systematic reviews which drew on earlier studies and subsequent informal searches also threw up earlier studies that were found to be of use.

Once the scoping was carried out, the selected papers were supplemented by grey literature recommended by experts in a number of key disciplines such as sustainable agricultural production, sustainable standards, food systems analysis, LCA, behaviour change, sociology, public health, nutrition, and food systems. Where specific subjects were addressed by very few publications, such as research related to palm oil, searches using the topic itself together with the general search terms related to consumption patterns and health were undertaken. Reviews of areas that were considered to be of relevance to the broader debate but out of scope of this work, such as sodium reduction, were also noted.

Papers that were considered to fall within the scope of this exercise were obtained and reviewed. An excel workbook was then used to collect specific information about each piece of literature. This included an overall summary (approx. 200 words), type of intervention, evaluation points relating to the evaluation framework, location of intervention and a consideration of whether the paper focuses on production or consumption.

As the study progressed the researchers discussed the inclusion of particular types of interventions, the relevance of specific papers to the review and the inclusion of publications that appeared to have shortcomings in terms of methodology until a decision could be reached by consensus. Additional searches were undertaken on an as-needed basis based on searches of academic publications databases, the Food Climate Research Network website and Google.

A full reference list of papers has been provided in Appendix 1.

References:

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