

Development of a new front-of-pack nutrition label in France the five-colour Nutri-Score

Globally, the burden of non-communicable diseases is growing and nutrition has been identified as one of the key risk factors impacting that trend. Consequently, “it is clear that nutrition represents a key lever to public health policies as it corresponds to a modifiable determinant of health that could be addressed through primary prevention interventions.” Among the different interventions, front-of-pack nutrition labelling is receiving increasing attention both from governments as well as other organisations. One of the reasons for this gain in popularity is that front-of-pack nutrition labelling is “considered helpful guidance for consumers towards healthier food choices at the point of purchase, as it delivers at-a-glance nutritional information.” Across Europe, a number of different front-of-pack labelling schemes co-exist. Nutri-Score, adopted by France in 2017, is one of them. The objective of this paper is to present “the various studies conducted in France prior to the selection of the Nutri-Score as its front-of-pack nutrition label to provide policy-makers with a framework for informed decisions.”

Between the initial proposal in 2013 and the implementation of the label, multiple studies on Nutri-Score were conducted by the Ministry of Health. These included a large consultation plan with scientists, retailers and industry representatives as well as a large-scale in-store trial and an experimental study. The Nutri-Score front-of-pack nutrition label was developed based on current knowledge of other front-of-pack systems. It was associated with validation studies conducted by independent research teams on the various aspects of the label, giving strong scientific support to a public health nutrition initiative, prompting its adoption at the national level in France. The current label was developed “based on current knowledge pertaining to front-of-pack systems.” Given the voluntary nature of Nutri-Score, the impact of the label in France will depend on the uptake by retailers and manufacturers. However, there is also a growing momentum from a societal perspective to adopt Nutri-Score: “a petition on the platform change.org supporting the Nutri-Score received more than 250 000 signatures, and a second petition asking retailers and manufacturers to adopt the scheme on the same platform received more than 44 000 signatures.”

Reference: Julia C.R., & Hercberg, S. Development of a new front-of-pack nutrition label in France: the five-colour Nutri-Score. *Public Health Panorama*. 2017;3(4):537–820.