Front-of-package nutrition labelling policy: global progress and future directions

Over the past decades, there has been a growing momentum, both from governments as well as the industry, to implement front-of-package nutrition labels. While a number of different labelling schemes exist globally, front-of-package nutrition labels have two main objectives: “(i) to provide additional information to consumers to inform healthier food choices; and (ii) to encourage the industry to reformulate products towards healthier options.” Given these two distinct objectives – one is policy oriented while the other seems to be industry-focused – “the purpose of this editorial is to provide an update on the global policy environment regarding government-endorsed front-of-pack nutrition labelling and to examine real-world evidence of policy implementation.”

Given the co-existence of a number of different logos globally, the study provides a list of the different front-of-pack nutrition labelling schemes that have been implemented globally. While identifying some of the common components of the different schemes, the study provides “a summary of various government-led FOP nutrition labelling schemes that have been implemented, divided by type, and how they vary.” Overall, the study showcases that the growing adoption of government-endorsed front-of-pack labelling policies reflects a political and societal acceptability of front-of-pack nutrition labelling.

The current body of studies suggest that “the impact of front-of-pack nutrition labelling on industry reformulation may have greater potential to affect all consumers, independent of sociodemographic characteristics, compared with impacts on consumer behaviour that are often influenced by sociodemographic characteristics.” Decisions regarding mandatory or voluntary implementation may also influence the amount of opposition from industry regarding front-of-pack nutrition labelling policy.