

Nutri-Score: A Public Health Tool to Improve Eating Habits in Portugal

Unhealthy diets have been identified as one of the key risk factors with regards to the rise in non-communicable diseases. Consequently, the development of nutritional policies to safeguard the health of the populations is urgent. Recently, the Portuguese government published the Integrated Strategy for the Promotion of Healthy Eating. One of the strategies included in it includes “promoting the usage of front-of-pack labelling.” The aim of this articles was to fill “the existing gap in guidance for the implementation of front-of-pack labelling systems.”

The existing research shows that the effectiveness of front-of-pack labelling is impacted by a number of criteria including the acceptability, objective comprehension and impact of the label regarding its ability to impact consumers’ buying decisions. The existing evidence highlights the superiority of Nutri-Score and its role in improving consumers’ “ability to better understand nutritional information and make healthier food choices.” Unfortunately, Portugal seems to be lagging behind: a “lack of decisive action has been promoted by policy and regulatory levers lying outside the health sector, limited collaboration between different governmental areas, and strong opposition by several food manufacturing companies and retail sectors” are key barriers for that. As a result, the country has multiple types of labelling systems co-existing at the same time without any success in creating a standardised label. This increases the likelihood of spreading confusion among consumers; the creation of “a national and harmonized front-of-pack labelling system” is urgent.

Reference: Francisco Goiana-Da-Silva et al. Nutri-Score: A Public Health Tool to Improve Eating Habits in Portugal. *Acta Médica Portuguesa*. 2019;32(3):175–178. <https://doi.org/10.20344/amp.11627>