



Regulating health and nutrition claims in the UK using a nutrient profile model: an explorative modelled health impact assessment

Health-related claims are defined as “statements found on food packets that convey the nutritional quality of a food (nutrition claims) and/or its impact on health outcome (health claims).” Furthermore, “evidence from experimental studies suggests that health-related claims have a substantial impact on dietary choices.” The European Union agrees that the placement of such claims should be done with caution and while a nutrient profile model has been proposed to regulate their placement, it has yet to be approved. Therefore, the current study aims to explore two questions:

1. What would be the impact on non-communicable disease mortality rates in the UK if a nutrient profile model was used to underpin the health-related claims legislation so that only foods that pass a nutrient profile model were eligible to carry health-related claims?
2. What would be the impact if foods that carry health-related claims but fail the nutrient profile model were reformulated so that they meet the model criteria?

In order to explore these research questions, two nutrient profile models were used as examples: the one used in Australia and New Zealand and the latest version proposed by the European Commission. The results of the current study highlight that the impact of health-related claims remains unclear. Furthermore, misunderstanding regarding the response of manufacturers and consumers also remains unclear. The study therefore concludes that “restricting the use of health-related claims with a nutrient profile model could result in either negative or positive health impacts.”

Reference: Kaur, A., Scarborough, P. & Rayner, M. Regulating health and nutrition claims in the UK using a nutrient profile model: an explorative modelled health impact assessment. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*. 2019;16(1):1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12966-019-0778-5>