

WHO/FAO expert draft: Diet Nutrition and the
Prevention of Chronic Diseases;

IUNS Comments

Vienna, May 27th, 2002

Dear Dr. Puska,

Thank you for inviting the IUNS to participate in this important review. In fact, three members of IUNS presidium (Wahlqvist, James, Uauy) have been involved in the expert consultation 2002.

The following are IUNS Comments:

- The report is an excellent and comprehensive review on the relationship between nutrition (and other behavioural factors) and noncommunicable chronic diseases. In addition, also important societal and ecological issues are taken into consideration.
- Even though the role of malnutrition and nutritional deficiencies is certainly not underestimated in the report (chapter 1.2), its importance for many countries might still be more emphasized. Also, it could be recommended that the national governments - before applying these guidelines - rank the specific health issues of their countries, including also those topics according to priority, which are not dealt with in detail in this report (but other reports).
- IUNS would like to recommend strongly that the final report on Nutrition and Chronic Disease
 - Emphasise and demonstrate an integrated approach to Burden-Disease of this kind, acknowledging its ecological basis in environment and related personal behaviours.
 - Draw together the nutrient and food substance considerations as a food and food pattern strategy for disease prevention and control.
 - Acknowledge the over-riding considerations of
 - food variety, especially from plant food, but also animal-derived food in disease prevention and management; this can allow advice about fat variety, with small amounts from different sources (as with unrefined basic commodities like nuts, seeds and grains, and lean meats and low fat dairy products) for nutritional adequacy and safety.
 - Low energy density (assessed as energy, or calories, per unit weight of food, meal or diet eg. cal/100g).

- High nutrient density (mass of biologically advantageous food component/energy value of food eg. mg/100kj) especially where decreased physical activity and energy throughput obtain.
- Chronic inflammation, although not strictly a nutrition related disease, should be mentioned in the report
- Nutrient (based) recommendation is not the appropriate way for communication.
 - Nutrition education/information and the way of its communication should better be food based.
- Miscellaneous/Details:
 - “Fruits and vegetables” are entitled “Nutrients” in ch. 4/Table 2 (p 22)
 - Table 2 (p 22): Total carbohydrates....
Free sugars < 10 % energy. Please clarify! Please consider an early publication by FAO 1997, in which this level was questioned or not used.
 - The content of the tables is not always fully coherent with the text:
In ch. 4.4 , 2nd paragr. (p. 35) it is stated: „... fruits and vegetables will .. help to reduce the overall incidence of cancer.”, even though they are (only) classified in the category “probable evidence” in Table 7 (p. 36).
 - Annex 4 (CVD):
table of content missing,
ch. 3.4., 2nd paragr. (p27) font error: β-carotene,
References of ch. 3, (p 37) ref. 81 (Scott JM) citation incomplete,
References of ch. 6, (p 61) ref. 3 (Trichopoulou & Vasilopoulou). “Br J Nutrition” instead of “British journal of Nutrition”
 - Annex 6 (dental diseases):
References: journals are underlined but not abbreviated.

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