Inappropriate Promotion of Commercial Infant Foods

New evidence supporting WHO’s *Guidance on Ending the Inappropriate Promotion of Foods for Infants and Young Children*

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Breastfeeding in the 21st Century
69th WHA, Geneva
24 May 2016
WHA RESOLUTION 34.22 (MAY 1981)

WHA adopted ‘International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes’ to protect breastfeeding and ensure the appropriate marketing of breast-milk substitutes (e.g. infant formula).
THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

WHA RESOLUTION 34.22 (MAY 1981)

WHA adopted ‘International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes’ to protect breastfeeding and ensure the appropriate marketing of breast-milk substitutes (e.g. infant formula).

The Code does not address:

• Follow-up Formulas (FUFs): 6 -12 months
• Growing-up Milks (GUMS): 12 - 36 months
• Commercial complementary foods

1. FUFs & GUMs came into existence after the Code.
2. Manufacturers misleadingly argue that these products are ‘complementary foods.’
World Health Assembly Context

63rd WHA Resolution 63.23
MAY 2010

Urges member states to end inappropriate promotion of foods for IYC and to ensure that nutrition and health claims not be permitted for foods for IYC, except where specifically provided for, in relevant Codex standards OR national legislation.

65th WHA Resolution 65.6
MAY 2012

Requests the Director General to provide clarification and guidance on the inappropriate promotion of foods for infants and young children cited in resolution WHA 63.23, taking into consideration the ongoing work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

69th World Health Assembly
MAY 2016

Agenda item 12.1 on Maternal, Infant and Young Child Nutrition will discuss draft guidance and resolution and decide the way forward.
ARCH project designed to generate evidence on the inappropriate promotion of foods for infants and young children with focus on commercial complementary foods.

Research studies conducted in Cambodia, Nepal, Senegal and Tanzania with government and other partners.

- Health system study on exposure of 2,400 mothers to promotion
- Labeling study of commercial complementary foods (n=200) and BMS (n=184)
- Point of sale study of retail outlets: 30 shops/country
- Media monitoring study in Cambodia and Senegal

Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
10 peer reviewed articles.

Key findings:

- Many breastmilk substitutes (BMS) found, especially follow-up formula (FUFs) and growing up milks (GUMs).
- Cross-promotion normal practice.
- Inappropriate labeling.
- Promotion via multiple channels.
Between 34-70% of commercial complementary food companies also produced BMS.

41-78% of these companies cross-promoted these products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>Cambodia</th>
<th>Nepal</th>
<th>Senegal</th>
<th>Tanzania</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross-promotion</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>42%</td>
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<td>Direct reference to BMS</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Pereira et al, 2016
THE EVIDENCE : CROSS-PROMOTION

Infant formula and commercial complementary foods
THE EVIDENCE: CROSS-PROMOTION

Infant formula / Follow-up formula / Growing-up milks
Percent of commercial complementary food labels with no recommended age of introduction or a recommended age of less than six months

- Phnom Penh (n=112): 30% (No age recommended), 9% (Age <6 mo)
- Kathmandu (n=14): 0% (No age recommended), 13% (Age <6 mo)
- Dakar (n=36): 4% (No age recommended), 20% (Age <6 mo)
- Dar es Salaam (n=22): 19% (No age recommended), 12% (Age <6 mo)

Pereira et al, 2016
THE EVIDENCE : INAPPROPRIATE LABELS ON COMMERCIAL COMPLEMENTARY FOODS
Percent Of Mothers Who Reported Promotions For BMS And Commercial complementary foods

- **Phnom Penh** (n=294): 86% for BMS, 29% for commercial foods
- **Kathmandu** (n=309): 28% for BMS, 20% for commercial foods
- **Dakar** (n=293): 41% for BMS, 37% for commercial foods
- **Dar es Salaam** (n=305): 12% for BMS, 1% for commercial foods

Any promotion for BMS (including FUFs and GUMs)
Any promotion for commercial complementary foods

Zehner, 2016
THE EVIDENCE: TELEVISION PROMOTIONS

Average number of TV advertising minutes each month promoting BMS and commercial complementary foods on all stations.

Number of minutes

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phnom Penh</td>
<td>224</td>
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<td>Dakar</td>
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- **BMS (including FUFs and GUMs)**
- **Commercial complementary foods**
CONCLUSION – BASED ON EVIDENCE FROM THE ARCH PROJECT…

Member States should strongly endorse WHO’s guidance and support an appropriate resolution.

The resolution should:

1. Recall the **importance of the Code** and its continued relevance.

2. Define *follow-up formulas* and *growing-up milks* as breastmilk substitutes ‘under’ the Code.

3. Urge Member States to implement WHO’s guidance to ensure that **commercial complementary foods are not** inappropriately promoted.

4. Request the Director-General to report on implementation progress every two years to ensure **application of the guidance** is monitored.
THANK YOU

“Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of overcoming it.”

Helen Keller