Food Regulatory Authority role in providing healthier food and diet in Iran

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DALYs in Iran

- In terms of DALYs* in Iran, **dietary risks**, high body-mass index, and high systolic blood pressure were the leading risk factors in 2013.
- The greatest reduction in all-cause mortality rate was experienced by females aged 1-4 years (84.0%).

* The **disability-adjusted life year** (DALY) is a measure of overall disease burden, expressed as the number of years lost due to ill-health, disability or early death. It was developed in the 1990s as a way of comparing the overall health and life expectancy of different countries.
The NCD targets for Iranian population at a glance

**Target 1:** A 25% relative reduction in risk of premature mortality from CVDs, cancer, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases

**Target 2:** At least 10% relative reduction in the harmful use of alcohol

**Target 3:** A 20% (10%) relative reduction in prevalence of insufficient physical activity

**Target 4:** A 30% relative reduction in mean population intake of salt/sodium

**Target 5:** A 30% relative reduction in prevalence of current tobacco use in persons aged 15+ years

**Target 6:** A 25% relative reduction in the prevalence of raised blood pressure or contain the prevalence of raised blood pressure

**Target 7:** Halt the rise in diabetes and obesity

**Target 8:** At least 70% (50%) of eligible people receive drug therapy and counseling (including glycemic control) to prevent heart attacks and strokes

**Target 9:** An 80% availability of the affordable basic technologies and essential medicines, including generics, required to treat major NCDs in both public and private facilities

**Target 10:** Achieve zero trans fatty acid content of edible oils and foodstuffs

**Target 11:** At least 50% of diabetic and hypertensive individuals (who are receiving treatment) have to achieve treatments goals for controlling blood sugar and systolic blood pressure

**Target 12:** A 20% relative reduction in mortality from traffic injuries

**Target 13:** A 10% relative reduction in drug use
Food safety and security stakeholders

• High Council of Health and Food Security
  – With cabinet power presided by the president of the Islamic Republic; and MOH as the secretariat (established by act of parliament)

• Ministry of Health & Medical Education
  – In charge of food safety:
    • Iran Food and Drug Administration
    • Public health network

• Ministry of Agriculture
  – In charge of food security
  – And partly food safety
    • Iran Veterinary Organization

• National Standard Organization
  – Food Standards
Procedures

• **High Council of Health and Food Security:**
  – Policy making regarding multi-sectoral approaches to food safety and security issues
  – Harmonizing and ensuring collaboration and coordination between competent authorities in food security, safety and nutrition
  – National NCD committee
    • National targets set according to global target based on WHO guidelines

• **Iran Food and Drug Administration:**
  – In charge of food and health products regulation, licensing, registration, marketing authorization, PMS, labeling and etc.
    • A technical committee comprised of 5 people, headed by IFDA president, appointed by the minister of health is in charge of all major decisions.
  – Public awareness regarding fat, salt and sugar contents
    • Traffic light labelling
    • A ten year program of both compulsory and voluntary reduction of calorie, fat, salt and sugar content of food stuff
  – Awarding healthy products along with penalties and fines for non-compliance
Targets and indicators to be achieved by private sector engagements

• Reduce average population salt intake to WHO recommended levels (from 10.5 g/day to max 5 g/day)
• Zero trans fatty acid (step by step reduction of TFA content in edible oils and food products (currently at 10% in confectionary oils, 5% ghee like oils, 2% household oils and etc)
• Food fortification to prevent NCDs (floor fortification with Iron, folic acid, Vit E and etc)
• Empowering consumers for making a healthy choice (via enforcing food labeling and traffic light nutrition labeling).
  – Introduced in 2014 allowing 3 years for the industry to cope, achieving 99% success rate so far
• Identification of harmful products and procedures
  – Foods with high content of fat, sugar and salt considered as harmful and are subject to higher VAT and mass media promotion limitation
  – No junk food at schools
• Conducting post market surveillance (PMS) to control and monitor the foods and drinks on the market;
• Green apple awards given to products with healthy criteria: less sugar, less fat, less salt and etc.
  – Ten years in place. Ceremonies are held twice annually and around 30-50 products are awarded
Healthy and safe food (Green Apple) certificate is awarded for:

- Reduction of energy via use of less carbohydrate and fats in formula.
- Reduction of contaminants and chemicals less than 50% of the permitted limit.
- Reduction of risk factors as trans and saturated fatty acids, salt, sugar and etc.
- Using natural and functional component in the formulation.
- Reformulation of unhealthy foods for better choices
Traffic light labelling

• Improvement of food labeling and design nutritional traffic light on food
• Easily interpreted information using color codes: Red, amber and green ‘traffic light’ shapes on the front of food packages show consumers, at a glance, whether a product is high, medium or low in fat, trans fatty acid, sugar, and salt and overall energy
• This makes it easy to identify healthier food choices (green or amber lights, rather than red).
• Has the potential to change our patterns of food supply and consumption
• Promote nutritional literacy of the community and giving consumers the choice
• Encourage food manufacturers to produce products with less amber or red lights

Serving size
• Energy
• Sugar
• Fat
• Salt
• Trans Fatty Acids
Samples of foods with traffic light labelling
Policy Implications

• The health policies in Iran are currently mainly focused on lowering unhealthy diet components such as trans and saturated fatty acids, processed meat, and sugar sweetened beverages.

• Results of studies show that it is not enough to just focus on lowering unhealthy diet components, one must also encourage the healthy ones as well such as: fruits, whole grain, fiber, omega-3 fatty acids, vegetables, PUFA, nuts and seeds, and dairy products.