

## Task Force on Evidence-based Nutrition:

I was invited by Professor Ricardo Uauy to convene a group in order to produce a series of working papers intended to inform the discussion relating to evidence-based nutrition. A number of papers have been written on the subject and there are generally accepted methods for deriving dietary reference values for micronutrients.

However, there is no universally agreed consensus regarding the criteria which should be fulfilled in order to make nutritional recommendations for the prevention and treatment of diabetes, for making health claims, to justify the benefits of functional foods and fortified foods and supplements, to evaluate public health nutrition programmes and to develop nutrition policy.

In particular debate has centred around the extent to which formal randomised controlled trials, which are pivotal to evidence-based medicine are also essential to evidence-based nutrition recommendations, given the appreciably differing contexts in which such recommendations are made. There have been discussions with a number of researchers internationally and thus far papers have been commissioned on the following topics:

- *An overview*
- *Disease aetiology*
- *Appropriate nutrition in infancy and childhood*
- *Appropriate nutrition in the elderly*
- *Functional foods, supplements and fortified foods*
- *Crisis situations*
- *Issues for developing countries*
- *Evidence for policy*

I had hoped that they might all have been completed by the time of the ICN but only one has been received thus far. The intention is to publish them and several further papers as a supplement to a journal (there have been preliminary discussions with Professor Prakash Shetty, Editor, European Journal of Clinical Nutrition) or a monograph. The hope is that they will inform further debate and ultimately lead to an agreed set of principles.

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