Strengthening of accountability systems to create healthy food environments and reduce global obesity

Boyd Swinburn, Vivica Kraak, Harry Rutter, Stefanie Vandevijvere, Tim Lobstein, Gary Sacks, Fabio Gomes, Tim Marsh, Roger Magnusson
Background

• Neoliberal politics and economics
  – Driving deregulation, individual responsibility
  – Reducing regulatory space for governments (lobbying, chill, trade & FDI agreements etc)

• Need for strengthened governance and accountability systems
  – Responsibility → accountability
  – Increasing power of TNCs
  – International plans eg NCD action plan, ICN2
  – National policies eg food marketing, taxes
Accountability Framework

1. Assessment
Collect, analyse, assess, and benchmark the available evidence about policies, practices, and performance and their effect on food environments and population health.

2. Communication
Share evidence with all stakeholders through a deliberative and participatory engagement process.

3. Enforcement
Empowered groups apply a range of incentives and disincentives to advance progress towards healthy food environments.

4. Improvements
Take remedial actions and monitor the effects of strengthening of policies, practices, and accountability structures to support healthy food environments and population health.

The governance process should be transparent, credible, verifiable, trustworthy, responsive, timely, and fair and have formal mechanisms to identify and manage conflicts of interest and settle disputes.
England’s National Child Measurement Program

Local Authorities (2011/12)


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Child obesity: BMI ≥ 95th centile of the UK90 growth reference
4-5 year olds
By year & deprivation decile

10-11 year olds
By year & deprivation decile
INFORMAS (www.informas.org)

• International Network for Food and Obesity/NCD Research, Monitoring and Action Support
  – INFORMAS is a global network of public-interest organisations and researchers that aims to monitor, benchmark and support public and private sector actions to create healthy food environments and reduce obesity, NCDs and their related inequalities

• Progress
  – Phase 1: (2012) frameworks & indicators
  – Phase 2: (2013/4) protocols, pilot testing
  – Phase 3: (from 2015/6) available globally
# INFORMAS module structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANISATIONS</th>
<th>PROCESSES</th>
<th>FOOD ENVIRONMENTS</th>
<th>IMPACTS</th>
<th>POPULATIONS</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public sector policies and actions</strong></td>
<td>How much progress have (international, national, state and local) governments made towards good practice in improving food environments and implementing obesity/NCDs prevention policies and actions? <em>(University of Auckland)</em></td>
<td><strong>Food composition</strong></td>
<td>What is the nutrient composition of foods and non-alcoholic beverages? <em>(The George Institute)</em></td>
<td><strong>Population diet</strong></td>
<td>What is the quality of the diet of different population groups? <em>(University of Sao Paulo)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Private sector policies and actions</strong></td>
<td>How are private sector organisations affecting food environments and influencing obesity/NCDs prevention efforts? <em>(Deakin University)</em></td>
<td><strong>Food labelling</strong></td>
<td>What health-related labelling is present on foods and non-alcoholic beverages? <em>(University of Oxford)</em></td>
<td><strong>Physiological &amp; metabolic risk factors</strong></td>
<td>What are the burdens of obesity and other risk factors? <em>(WHO)</em></td>
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<td><strong>Food marketing</strong></td>
<td>What is the exposure and power of promotion of unhealthy foods and non-alcoholic beverages to different population groups? <em>(University of Wollongong)</em></td>
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<td><strong>Food provision</strong></td>
<td>What is the nutritional quality of foods and non-alcoholic beverages provided in different settings (eg. schools, hospitals, workplaces)? <em>(University of Auckland)</em></td>
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<td><strong>Food retail</strong></td>
<td>What is the availability of healthy and unhealthy foods and non-alcoholic beverages in communities and within retail outlets? <em>(University of Auckland)</em></td>
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<td><strong>Food prices</strong></td>
<td>What is the relative price and affordability of ‘less healthy’ compared with ‘healthy’ diets, meals &amp; foods? <em>(Queensland University of Technology)</em></td>
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<td><strong>Food trade &amp; investment</strong></td>
<td>What are the impacts of trade and investment agreements on the healthiness of food environments? <em>(Australian National University)</em></td>
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<td><strong>Health outcomes</strong></td>
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<td>What are burdens of NCD morbidity and mortality? <em>(WHO)</em></td>
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Benchmarking food policy progress

- 52 member Expert Panel
- 42 indicators:
  - Policy implementation
  - Infrastructure support
- Verified evidence of implementation
- Benchmarks: international best practice
- Rated implementation
- Prioritised actions

www.informas.org
NZ Food-EPI

- Positives: international standard in 6
- Stronger infrastructure than specific policies
- Major gaps in implementation
  - Marketing to children
  - Fiscal policies
  - Comprehensive plans & funding
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Govt holding companies to account

• Legal
  – Laws, regulations, procurement, institutions etc

• Quasi-regulatory
  – Regulatory structures around voluntary actions, threat of regulation, monitoring & reporting etc

• Political

• Market-based

• Public communications

• Private communications
Examples

• Holding to account
  – Government holding private sector to account
  – Civil society holding governments to account
  – Civil society holding private sector to account

• Examples
  – England’s Responsibility Deal Food Network
  – Brazil’s Food and Nutrition Security System
  – New York City multi-level efforts
Messages from the Series

• Framing obesity as exploitation of human vulnerabilities
• Protect healthy food preferences from market intrusion
• Allow people to satisfy healthy food preferences
• Join undernutrition & overnutrition efforts
• Act on marketing of unhealthy foods to children
• Strengthen health professional leadership
• Increase the public demand for policy actions
• Move from responsibility to accountability