



Government Perspectives and Expectations Regarding Food Innovation and Renovation

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INTRODUCTION: The World Health Organisation (WHO) reports that globally, 38 million people in 2013 died from Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) and that NCD deaths are projected to increase by 15% globally between 2010 and 2013. Risk factors that have been associated with increased prevalence and death due to NCDs are tobacco use, physical inactivity, **unhealthy diet** and the harmful use of alcohol.

South Africa has seen an increase in obesity over the past few years and is ranked the highest in Africa. The obesity increase is not limited to the adult population and women are the most affected.

Food supply, socio economic factors and government policies are identified as key drivers to obesity. Therefore priority interventions should be linked to the drivers.

DISCUSSION: There are specific strategies that have been proven to have the highest impact in reducing obesity. These include fiscal policies, restrictions on food advertising and promotion, food labelling, making physical activity accessible and increasing availability of healthy foods.

Government has already taken steps to towards food renovations such as the salt reduction regulation, regulation restricting trans-fats and food labelling regulations. In view of the increase in obesity the question is: "Are these innovations adequate"?

South Africa has developed a multi-sectorial strategy for the prevention and control of obesity. The aim of the strategy is to educate and create an enabling environment for the public to make healthy choices. The strategy aims to apply a multipronged approach for the country to achieve the proposed 10% reduction by 2020. The food industry has a role to play through the modification of existing products to increase options that promote healthy eating. The challenge though is having an all-inclusive renovated product that addresses health needs and stability concerns by industry. When innovation and renovation is achieved, additional concerns are on affordability and accessibility of healthy products.