

Strengthening and monitoring food policies to reduce chronic disease in the Pacific Islands

A/Prof Webster will discuss the results of an NHMRC-funded salt reduction intervention project in Fiji and Samoa. The project used a pre-post study design to evaluate the impact of multi-faceted population-wide interventions. Measurement of population salt intake and knowledge and behaviours around salt was integrated into the WHO's STEPwise program for Noncommunicable disease risk factor surveillance at baseline. Interventions were based on the WHO's three pillars for salt reduction comprising of government policy initiatives to reduce salt in foods and meals combined with community mobilisation for behaviour change and interventions in settings (schools in Samoa and hospitals in Fiji). Whilst consumer awareness of the negative impact of salt on health has been raised in both countries, further sustained efforts is required to translate this knowledge into substantial changes in behavior. There has not yet been a measureable reduction in salt intake in either country. The research has provided important new evidence on salt intakes in the region. Salt is now much more prominent on the political agenda and the project has facilitated improved cross-sectoral collaboration on NCDs and strengthened mechanisms for engaging with the food industry. Salt reduction is now mainstreamed into government policies including through voluntary or regulatory salt standards and salt education is part of national NCD or nutrition strategies. Workforce capacity to address NCDs has been increased in both countries and longer term monitoring of impacts of sustained programs is planned through future WHO STEPS surveys in 2018/19.

About Associate Professor Jacqui Webster

A/Prof Jacqui Webster (BA Sociology, MA Development Studies, PhD Public Health, RPHNut) is Head of Advocacy and Policy Impact in the Centre for Health Systems Research and Director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Population Salt Reduction at the George institute for Global Health. She is Associate Professor at UNSW Sydney with an honorary position at the University of Sydney. Her primary research interests are advocacy, food policy and implementation science and for the last 10 years her main focus has been salt reduction strategies and food industry engagement. She is currently supported by a four year co-funded National Health and Medical Research Council/National Heart Foundation Career Development Fellowship to support her research on international salt reduction strategies.

Light refreshment is provided

Venue: Room 305, Level 3, Samuels Building, UNSW Upper Campus, Randwick

Enquiries: Ravit Danieli-Vlandis ravit@unsw.edu.au

Parking: Available on L5 of the parking station; enter via Gate 11 Botany St, Randwick

Map: www.facilities.unsw.edu.au/getting-uni/campus-maps

The School of Public Health
and Community Medicine

Seminar Invitation

Wednesday 12th July

12:00 - 1:00 pm

Room 305 Samuels Building



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