



CANCER, BODY WEIGHT & HEALTHY DIET

17 October 2018, 14.00 - 16.00 | European Parliament, room A1 E201

Hosted by MEP Nessa Childers (IE, S&D)



Group of the Progressive Alliance of
Socialists & Democrats
in the European Parliament



14:00 - 14:05	Welcome and opening remarks Nessa Childers MEP
14:05 - 14:10	About MEPs against Cancer Wendy Yared, Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)
14:10 - 15:00	Visualising cancer data: a new tool on cancer attributable to obesity Isabelle Soerjomataram, International Agency for Research on Cancer Third expert report on diet, nutrition, physical activity & cancer: a blueprint for cancer prevention Germund Daal, Wereld Kanker Onderzoek Fonds (WCRF NL) European Commission action on nutrition and physical activity Attila Balogh, European Commission - DG SANTE
15:00 - 15:10	Discussion
15:10 - 15:40	How wholegrains contribute to a healthy diet Jan-Willem van der Kamp, Healthgrain Forum Taking action on the ground: the example of the Danish partnership for increasing wholegrain consumption Gitte Laub Hansen, Danish Cancer Society
15:45 - 15:55	Discussion
15:55 - 16:00	Concluding remarks



MEPs AGAINST CANCER MEETING

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KEY MESSAGES

- Overweight and obesity are a major risk factor for cancer, having been accounted responsible for an estimated of half-a-million new cancer cases globally in 2012. Within the WHO European Region, the attributable percentage of new cases is strikingly higher.
- According to a Cancer Research UK report published in September 2018, overweight and obesity could overtake smoking as the single biggest cause of cancer in UK in a quarter of a century, if current trends continue as projected. A similar situation is pictured elsewhere in Europe.
- The 4th edition of the European Code Against Cancer (ECAC) clearly recommends the public to “take action to be a healthy body weight” and to “have a healthy diet” which includes “eating plenty of wholegrains, pulses, fruits & vegetables”.
- There is strong evidence that people can reduce their risk of cancer by adopting healthy dietary and activity behaviours. An analysis by the World Cancer Research Fund on the dose-response relationship between wholegrain consumption and the risk of colorectal cancer indicated a 17% decreased risk per 90g intake of wholegrains consumed per day.
- Further actions need to be taken to implement cancer prevention recommendationsthrough mechanisms available at the EU level.

INTRODUCTION



MEP Nessa Childers welcomed speakers and other participants at the European Parliament. MEP Childers noted how managing body weight can be a very personal and sensitive issue and highlighted the importance of the contribution of body weight and nutrition to tackling the increasing cancer burden. This begins with a better understanding of the underlying evidence linking such risk factors and the actions to be taken to reduce cancer risk, among both general population as well as the EU and Member States' level.

MEP Childers' introductory note was followed by a presentation from Dr. Wendy Yared, Director of the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL), who introduced the work and upcoming events of the MEPs Against Cancer (MAC Group).

INVITED SPEAKERS

Visualising cancer data: a new tool on cancer attributable to obesity

Isabelle Soerjomataram, International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)

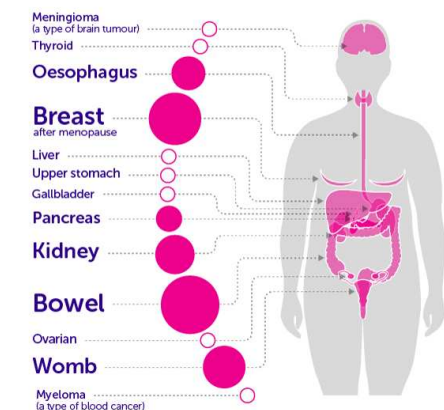


Recent data suggests that the list of cancers attributable to obesity has expanded from 6 cancer sites to 13. Taking the example of oesophagus cancer, data shows that obesity, despite its long-term effect, is already responsible for increasing trends in certain types of cancer. Furthermore, reducing body mass index (BMI) has proven to have an impact on reducing cancer incidence. An estimated half-a-million new cancer cases could be prevented globally if actions to reduce body weight are taken, otherwise data suggests that within 25 years' obesity will eventually overtake smoking as the biggest preventable cause of cancer with an alerting increase of childhood obesity.

Further information can be visualised through IARC's tool [Global Cancer Observatory](#).

BEING OVERWEIGHT CAN CAUSE 13 TYPES OF CANCER

●●● Larger circles indicate cancers with more UK cases linked to being overweight or obese
○ Number of linked cases are currently being calculated and will be available in 2017



LET'S BEAT CANCER SOONER
cruk.org



Third expert report on diet, nutrition, physical activity & cancer: a blueprint for cancer prevention

Germund Daal, Wereld Kanker Onderzoek Fonds (WCRF NL)

The latest findings of the newly published Third Expert Report - Diet, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Cancer: a Global Perspective were presented. The third report is based upon extensive data gathered through the Continuous Update Project (CUP). The CUP collects data from 51M people and 17 cancer sites in a total of 12.000 pages. Some highlights are presented during the meeting, such as the fact that exposure of wholegrains decreases colorectal cancer risk whereas sugar and sweetened drinks increases it. Drawing attention on how to transfer the presented knowledge into practice, WCRF recommendations on cancer prevention, its adaption for the general public into a traffic light diagram, as well as the NOURISHING framework and the new Building momentum series of policy reports were presented. More information can be found at [WCRF's website](#).



European Commission action on nutrition and physical activity

Attila Balogh, European Commission – DG SANTE



The European Commission (EC) has taken a broad approach tackling in general nutrition and physical activity, as part of a general framework to tackle chronic disease. Dr Balogh presented multiple initiatives taken at the European level, placing special emphasis on the Action Plan on Childhood Obesity 2014-2020 since restricting marketing and advertisement for children remains a challenge in the efforts to reduce obesity. Concurrently, policies are required to work on reformulation so that providing the healthy option becomes the easy option. The EC is currently encouraging more member states to work together on a food composition database that will contain data on 50,000 food products. Furthermore, in order to align with United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the EC has created a steering group on prevention and health promotion, as well as securing renewed funding for the next health programme (2021-2027).

How wholegrains contribute to a healthy diet

Jan-Willem van der Kamp, Healthgrain Forum



The Healthgrain forum definition for wholegrain (WG) was presented, with the acknowledgement that the approach proposed by the forum is becoming increasingly recognised. Dr. van der Kamp showed data proving that consuming WG in a balanced diet is beneficial to health, for example a daily intake of just 1 or 2 slices of whole grain bread already shows an impact in health outcomes. Therefore, he proposes for dietary recommendations to have explicit mention of WG and for achievable targets in WG intake to be set. Looking into the future, food innovation should be encouraged to increase the range of wholegrain foods available for the consumer. *Further information can be found at the [Healthgrain Forum website](#).*

Taking action on the ground: the example of the Danish partnership for increasing wholegrain consumption

Gitte Laub Hansen, Danish Cancer Society

Despite extensive data supporting that dietary whole grain (WG) intake can prevent type 2 diabetes, heart disease and colorectal cancer, Dr. Laub Hansen points out that today a large proportion of the population still do not meet WG dietary guidelines. What's more, WG intake even decreased between 1990 and 2010. In order to counteract this development, the Whole Grain Partnership (WGP) was established in 2009 in Denmark. The successes of this Public Private Partnership were presented, this included the campaign to develop and promote an official the logo "Choose whole grain first". The success of the WGP can be measured through the doubling of WG intake, as well as increased WG-containing products availability and awareness among Danish. A joint European campaign to raise awareness on the health benefits of WG was proposed, perhaps with a defined celebrity as a WG ambassador, which could help replicate the Danish success elsewhere in Europe.



DISCUSSION

Multiple issues were addressed during the discussion, such as the inconsistencies on the messages that are given to the general population in regards of nutrition and physical activity.

It was agreed that there is a need for a common definition of WGs within Europe to be established. Moreover, aside from the aforementioned food database to be developed by the European Commission (EC), a study on intake and consumption of fibres and WGs is under proposal. Dr Balogh actively encouraged the use of [DG SANTE Best Practice Portal](#) and the [EU Health policy platform](#) as two-way channel to share projects, like the ones presented and discussed during the meeting.

In conclusion, MEP Childers expresses her support towards further research on the topic, including comparative studies on childhood obesity among Europe and independent studies on nutrition and physical activity, recognising them both as important risk factors for cancer.



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