

PACKAGED FOOD SUPPLY IN FIJI: NUTRIENT LEVELS, COMPLIANCE WITH SODIUM TARGETS AND ADHERANCE TO LABELLING REGULATIONS

THE 1ST INTERNATIONAL ELECTRONIC CONFERENCE ON
NUTRIENTS - NUTRITIONAL AND MICROBIOTA EFFECTS
ON CHRONIC DISEASE

Background

- Unhealthy diets consist of nutrient poor, processed foods and are a key contributor to the prevalence of non-communicable disease in Fiji
- The World Health Organization recommends limiting harmful nutrients in foods, and ensuring consumers can access healthy foods
- Fijian Government has regulated nutrient labelling and set voluntary sodium reformulation targets
- National food databases can monitor the progress of initiatives that seek to improve nutrient labelling and the nutritional composition of foods

George Institute's FoodSwitch database

- All available foods and beverages surveyed from five large supermarkets in Suva, Fiji in 2018
- Images of products collected by trained data collectors using mobile application
- Key product and nutrition information extracted per product and stored in the FoodSwitch database
- Foods routinely categorised into 15 major food groups and select subcategories, allowing for cross-country comparison

Packaged food supply in Fiji

- Our research sought to assess compliance with nutrient labelling regulations and the voluntary sodium reformulation targets
- Products excluded products if they did not contribute significantly to nutrient intake
- ‘Top’ manufacturers selected for analyses based on the number of products surveyed
- A total of 4,278 products analysed based on data collected in 2018
- Products spanned 14 major categories, 36 subcategories and 34 manufacturers

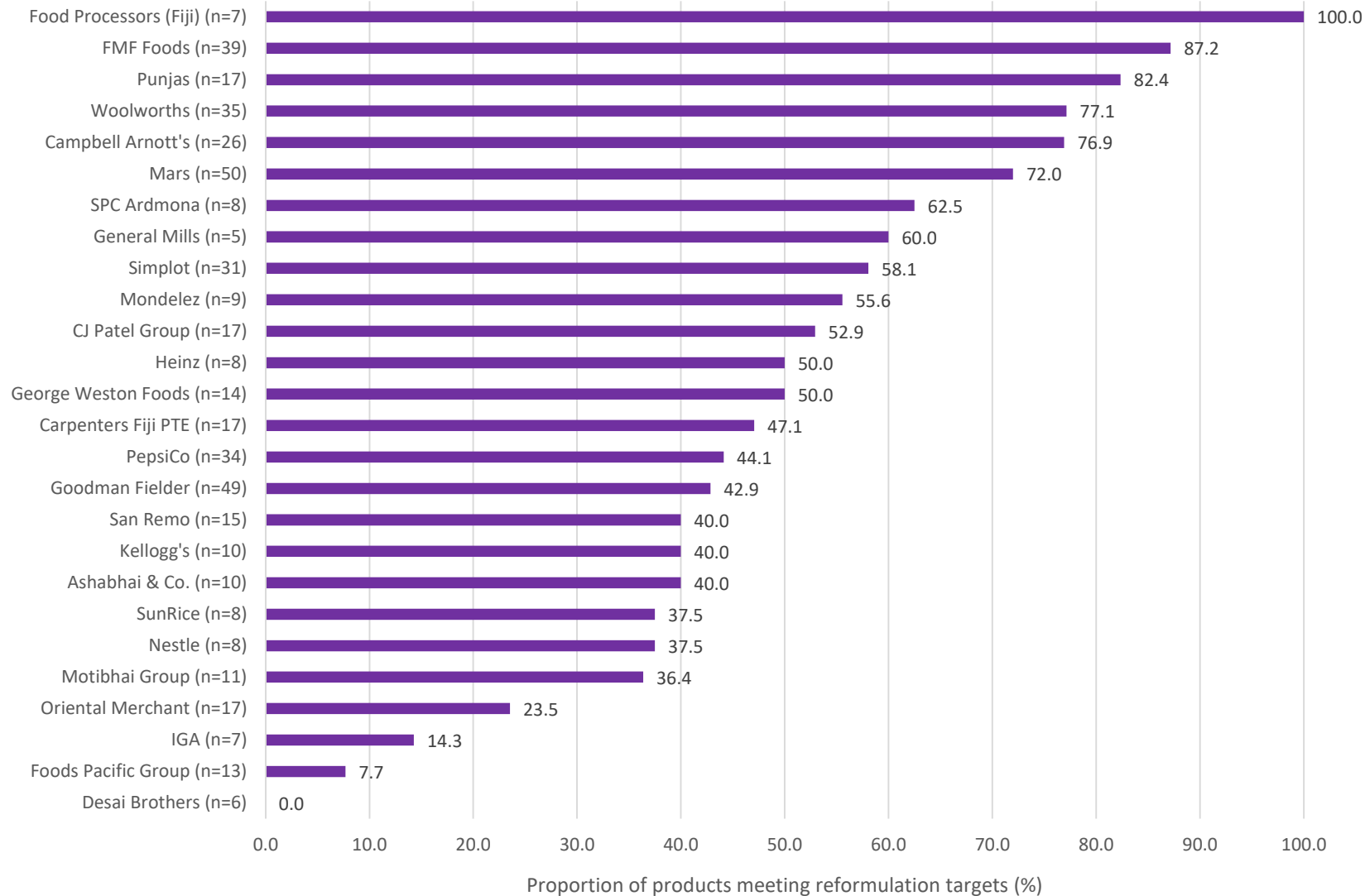
Nutrition labelling in Fiji, 2018

- **14.1% of products fully compliant with Fiji nutrient labelling regulations** i.e. displaying all of the following nutrients: sodium, sugar, energy, protein, carbohydrates, saturated fat, trans fat, monounsaturated fat and polyunsaturated fat
- Labelling of individual nutrients was highest for sodium (95.4%) and sugar (92.4%), and lowest for trans-fat, monounsaturated fat and polyunsaturated fat
- Of the top 34 manufacturers:
 - 21 complied with sodium labelling across all their products
 - 19 complied with sugar labelling across all their products

Voluntary sodium reformulation targets in Fiji

- Of the 4,278 products analysed, 1,188 products had relevant voluntary sodium reformulation targets and spanned the following categories: biscuits, canned fish, meat & other products, noodles, sauces & spreads and snacks
- **59.5% of these products already met their relevant target**
- Compliance was highest for biscuits (80.5%) and lowest for noodles (20.0%)
- Compliance was assessed for manufacturers with at least three products eligible for voluntary sodium reformulation

Voluntary sodium reformulation targets in Fiji – manufacturer compliance



Key findings and recommendations

- Whilst sodium and sugar labelling is present on the majority of packaged foods, adherence to Fiji's nutrient labelling regulations overall was low in 2018
- The majority of eligible products already met the voluntary sodium reformulation targets, with compliance varied across food categories and manufacturers
- Improving the nutritional composition of foods and improving labelling through regulation has the potential to curb the escalating burden of diet related non-communicable diseases
- Manufacturers have a responsibility to improve the healthiness of their products and to comply with nutrient labelling so that consumers are able to make healthy food choices