

Nutrient Content and Labelling Status of Pre-Packaged Beverages in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract : Background: Beverage choice can have implications for the risk of non-communicable diseases. However, there is a lack of knowledge in assessing the nutritional content of these beverages. This study aims to describe the nutrient content of pre-packaged beverages available in the Saudi market. Design: Data were collected from the Saudi Branded Food Data-base (SBFD). Nutrient content was standardized in terms of units and reference volumes to ensure consistency in analysis. Results: A total of 1490 beverages were analyzed. The highest median levels of the majority of nutrients were found among dairy products; energy (68.4(43-188]kcal/100 ml in a milkshake); protein (8.2(0.5-8.2]g/100 ml in yogurt drinks); total fat (2.1(1.3-3.5]g/100 ml in milk); saturated fat (1.4(0-1.4]g/100 ml in yogurt drinks); cholesterol (30(0-30]mg/100 ml in yogurt drinks); sodium (65(65-65].4mg/100 ml in yogurt drinks); and total sugars (12.9(7.5-27]g/100 ml in milkshake). Carbohydrate level was the highest in nectar (13(11.8-14.2] g/100ml]; fruits drinks (12.9(11.9-13.9] g/100ml), and sparkling juices (12.9(8.8-14] g/100ml). The highest added sugar level was observed among regular soft drinks (12(10.8-14] g/100ml). The average rate of nutrient declaration was 60.95%. Carbo-hydrate had the highest declaration rate among nutrients (99.1%), and yogurt drinks had the highest declaration rate among beverage categories (92.7%). The median content of vitamins A and D in dairy products met the mandatory addition levels. Conclusion: This study provides valuable insights into the nutrient content of pre-packaged beverages in the Saudi market. It serves as a foundation for future research and monitoring. The findings of the study support the idea of taxing sugary beverages and raise concerns about the health effects of high sugar in fruit juices. Despite the inclusion of vitamins D and A in dairy products, the study highlights the need for alternative strategies to address these deficiencies.

Keywords : pre-packaged beverages, nutrients content, nutrients declaration, daily percentage value, mandatory addition of vitamins

Conference Title : ICNFS 2024 : International Conference on Nutrition and Food Sciences

Conference Location : Singapore, Singapore

Conference Dates : September 12-13, 2024