Report

COT joint reports

Plant-based drinks: health benefits and risks

A SACN and COT assessment comparing cows' milk with plant-based drinks available in the UK, with recommendations for adults and children aged one year and over.

As a result of an increasing number of enquiries received by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Public Health England (PHE) and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) about plant-based drinks used as an alternative to cows' milk, the COT were asked to consider the potential risks posed by almond, oat and soya drinks consumed in the diets of infants and young children aged 1 to 5 years. In a statement published in 2021, the Committee concluded that neither the safety of these drinks, nor the suitability of the current guidance, could be confirmed from a toxicological perspective. Plant based drinks statement 2021.

In 2021, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition (SMCN) also considered plant-based drinks and concluded that replacing cows' milk with plant-based drinks could have a negative impact on certain micronutrient intakes. Following these assessments, it was agreed by both SACN and COT that a joint SACN/COT Working Group (WG), comprising members of both Committees with an independent Chair and supported by a joint Secretariat, be established to conduct a benefit: risk analysis considering both nutritional and toxicological aspects associated with the consumption of plant-based drinks by the UK population.

It was agreed that this joint assessment would be restricted to consideration of the nutritional and toxicological issues associated with the most commonly consumed drinks: almond, oat and soya, with cows' milk as the main comparator and would use BRAFO methodology to undertake the benefit- risk analysis. The joint SACN and COT report has now been published.

Plant-based drinks: health benefits and risks - GOV.UK

ACNFP and COT Joint Subgroup on CBD and Hemp Derived Products

Joint position paper from the (ACNFP) & (COT) on establishing a Safe Upper Limit for delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (Δ9-THC) and its precursor as contaminants of hemp-derived products including CBD novel foods (2025)

Joint position paper from the (ACNFP) & (COT) on establishing a Safe Upper Limit for delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (Δ9-THC) and its precursor as contaminants of hemp-derived products including CBD novel foods | Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes

ACNFP and COT Joint Subgroup on CBD and Hemp Derived Products

Pure form CBD Position Paper & Lay Summary (2023)

Joint position paper from ACNFP & COT on establishing provisional ADI for pure form CBD in foods

Synthesising Epidemiology Evidence Subgroup (SEES) Report (2018)

The Synthesising Epidemiology Evidence Subgroup (SEES) of the COT and Committee on Carcinogenicity (COC) was set up in 2015. Its aim was to review and document current practice, given recent international and national development of methods by which evidence is synthesised, and to make recommendations for COT/COC guidance.

Human studies can provide direct evidence of health impacts of particular exposures. However, much of the evidence comes from observational epidemiological studies, where control of chance, bias (including exposure misclassification) and confounding may be problematic. Systematic review and meta-analysis are gold standard methods for combining epidemiological studies, but may not be available, or practical or possible to conduct for many of the questions considered by COT/COC.

Epidemiological reviews leading to statements or opinions in the last 10 years by COT/COC were identified and reviewed. A wide range of topics were identified relating to infant feeding, alcohol consumption, asbestos exposure, organophosphate exposure and vitamin E intake. The review methods used by the Committees varied by topic and requirement.

Evidence synthesis in the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) was discussed and a number of well documented major systems for evidence synthesis were reviewed. SEES also considered evidence synthesis methodologies and tools available in order to draw up guidance points for scoping, conducting and reporting. Quality assessment of studies was considered an integral part of review and a large number of numerical scoring tools are available. Specific issues related to quantitative risk assessment and meta-analysis were identified. Documentation of uncertainty and of (potential conflict of) interests was considered important.

SEES also considered methods for combining epidemiological and toxicological evidence. These are less well developed than those for systematic review, particularly in a quantitative framework. There are currently international initiatives in this area and COT/COC will need to keep this methodological area under regular review

SEES Report PDF

PDF
View SEES Report as PDF (792.05 KB)

Potassium

Potassium based replacements for sodium additives. (2017)

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) and Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer products and the Environment (COT) have published an assessment of the health benefits and risks of using potassium based sodium replacers in foods in the UK

External link to An assessment of the health benefits and risks of using potassium based sodium replacers in foods in the UK

Bystanders Risk Assessment Working Group (BRAWG) Report (2012)

The Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) and Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer products and the Environment (COT) have published their joint report, Bystanders Risk Assessment Working Group (BRAWG).

External link to the national archive for the 2012 BRAWG report

SACN advice on fish consumption: benefits and risks (2004)

Joint report of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) and the Committee on Toxicity (COT) on the consumption of fish.

External link to the national archive for the 2004 joint report of the SACN and the COT on the consumption of fish

Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals (2003) Safe Upper Levels for Vitamins and Minerals

The final report of the Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals was published in May 2003.

External link to the national archive for the 2003 report of the expert group on vitamins and minerals