What we do:

We have a remit to support WHO Member States achieve the global target of a 30% relative reduction in mean population salt intake by 2025, as part of a set of 9 global targets to reduce non-communicable diseases. We do this through: research to increase the evidence, direct support to countries, and facilitating networking and dissemination of information.

Support on monitoring salt intake:

We are supporting countries to establish effective salt reduction programs. Activities have included providing expert advice and training on different approaches to assess salt intake, consumer knowledge, attitudes and behaviours (KAB) related to salt, major sources of salt in the diet, and sodium levels in foods.

The Centre continues to offer regular advice and support to the following countries: Pacific Islands, Vietnam, Mongolia, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Cambodia, Laos, Hong Kong and Iran.

- Indonesia: The Centre has recently conducted an in-country consultation to support the Ministry of Health in Indonesia to obtain data on national salt intake levels with the view to establishing the evidence for carrying out a program of work to reduce salt intake in the country.

- Vanuatu: The Centre has administered a workshop on collecting 24-hour and spot urines, obtaining information on KAB regarding salt, carrying out a dietary survey to identify the main sources of salt in the diet, and a shop survey to gather data on sodium levels in foods.

Support for strategy development:

Over the last 2 years we’ve participated in the following meetings and consultations:

- In-country consultations in Indonesia (August 2015) and Cambodia (September 2015)
- Hosted a one-week salt reduction training in Sydney for Ministry of Health, Malaysia (October 2015)
- A regional consultation on NCDs in Cambodia (December 2015)
- European Salt Action Network Meeting in Portugal (April 2016)
- A teleconference on developing salt targets in Hong Kong (April 2016)

Networking, communication and collaboration:

- Monthly bulletin and website. WHO CC SALT facilitates the exchange of learning through its growing network by sending out a regular email communication on salt reduction which includes information on new research, country updates, relevant meetings and policy changes to over 800 stakeholders monthly. The Centre has expanded its target audience from the Asia Pacific Region to global. We are in the process of developing a WHO CC SALT reduction website which will be the new online portal for all aspects of salt reduction.

- Victorian Salt Partnership. In Australia, the Centre has been working with VicHealth, the National Heart Foundation, Deakin University and the Victorian Department of Health as part of the Victorian Salt Partnership. A 3-year National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) grant has been awarded to evaluate the impact of the state-wide strategy to reduce salt in Victoria, Australia.

- World Hypertension League. The Centre has also partnered with the World Hypertension League to produce the ‘Science of Salt Weekly,’ a weekly bulletin summarizing the peer-reviewed literature in relation to new studies on salt and health (http://www.hypertensiontalk.com/science-of-salt-weekly). In addition, a regularly updated systematic review of studies is being published in the Journal of Clinical Hypertension to keep clinicians and policy stakeholders informed of the growing body of research related to (1) the implementation of salt reduction interventions and (2) relationship of salt and health outcomes.

Increasing the evidence base for salt reduction:

We have contributed to a range of new publications to increase the evidence base for salt reduction including:


- A systematic review of state and community-level salt reduction initiatives and their impact (http://jech.bmj.com/content/early/2016/05/24/jech-2015-206997.abstract)

- An interventional study conducted in Australia which measured the effects of a multi-component salt reduction intervention on salt intake (http://ibmpubhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-016-0664-3)

- We have partnered with the National Institute of Nutrition in Vietnam to publish the results of a behaviour change salt reduction intervention based on the Communication for Behavioural Impact (COMBI) framework (http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jch.12884/full)

Resources:

The Centre has collaborated with WHO to produce the SHAKE Package for Salt Reduction, a set of evidence-based practices, policies and interventions from different settings around the world, aimed at guiding Member States achieve a reduction in population salt consumption. It includes five key action areas:

- S - surveillance
- H - messaging industry
- A - labelling standards
- K - knowledge
- E - environment