

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Salt Content of Instant Noodles in Malaysia: A Cross-Sectional Study
AUTHORS	Tan, Chun Han; Chow, Zhen Yee; Ching, Siew Mooi; Devaraj, Navin Kumar; He, Feng; MacGregor, Graham; Chia, Yook Chin

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

REVIEWER	Dr Rodrigo Rodriguez-Fernandez Global Medical Director, Non-communicable Diseases, International SOS and CEO, NCD Asia Pacific Alliance, London, UK
REVIEW RETURNED	26-Jun-2018

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>Overall a good manuscript addressing a critical topic with an important sample size. My main concern is the grammatical and English that needs revision before publication. Conclusions and recommendations are well presented and clearly stated.</p> <p>Page 2, line 26 should read 0.7g to 8.5g Page 3 line 8, would be good to include what percentage of the market the authors analysed, even if gross estimate. Page 4, line 8, Important to signal WHO has identified salt reduction as a "best buy" if you are talking about cost effectiveness. Page 4, line 12, Mention level for children Page 5, line 32, This line should go under limitations not in methods Page5, line 36, Do these have Zero salt? If so, then the title of the study is misleading as it only includes Floured instant noodles. Page 7, line 22, There are noodles sold on websites but not at hypermarkets and retailer chains? This needs to be clarified. Was it because a lack of availability within the market? Etc Page 10, Table 4, What's the order of the noodle flours? Should be at least by sample size. Page 11, Table 5, need to define what you mean by common. No definition in methods. Page 13, line 14, Important to comment where salt comes from within the Malay population. At the table, during cooking or from processed foods. Page 13, line 31, Provide reference Page 14 line 31, This is a critical point of the study. If consumers did not enjoy low salt content noodles, there would not be any on the market, hence the incentive for gradual reformulation.</p> <p>How many packaged noodles to people on average consumer per day in Malaysia? And if there is an age difference? This is relevant</p>
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	to the public health community as it will influence messaging strategies for the public.
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REVIEWER	Bianca van der Westhuizen Nutrition Science Manager Heart and Stroke Foundation of South Africa
REVIEW RETURNED	27-Jun-2018

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>Reviewer comments on publication bmjopen-2018-024702 "Salt content of instant noodles in Malaysia: A cross-sectional study Although I feel this is important research, I would suggest that it gets published in a local journal as it would have a greater impact. Some general suggestions to improve the publication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The language in its current form is not on standard. There is a number of grammatic issues as well as sentences that does not make sense or is too long. • More recent references are needed especially when talking about the link between sodium and hypertension. • There is no mention in your literature review on the hypertension or high blood pressure rates in Malaysia. Is the high salt intake in the country even a problem? • In your data collection paragraph, also state the time period in which this data was collected. • I'm not convinced of the relevance of Table 2 and 3 in your results. If this was to be discussed more in the discussion I would be clearer. • Don't repeat results that are presented in your table in your text as well. • Your discussion should be written in scientific format, for example page 13, line 50-51 is not scientific. Page 13, line 51-53 also does not make sense as its written there. • Your references need to be consistent throughout. Reference 12 is not correctly referenced as well as reference 29. Reference 18 also need to be re-written (where was this article published?) • Figure 2 – Replace your label names >4g/100g and <4g/100g rather than "Doesn't exceed" and "Exceed"
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REVIEWER	Hidemi Takimoto National Institutes of Biomedical Innovation, Health, and Nutrition, JAPAN
REVIEW RETURNED	16-Jul-2018

GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>The current manuscript provides valuable information regarding the commonly consumed instant noodles in Malaysia. However, the results presented here should be revised, in order to provide additional information to international readers. Otherwise, it should be submitted in a local journal. Here are some suggestions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Readers outside of Malaysia may not be familiar with the types of flavors of the instant noodles. I wonder whether these flavors were locally familiar, or from other regions (Korean, Tokyo?). 2) Table 4 should be presented as a supplementary material. I don't think it is necessary to present salt content of individual noodles, and chi-square tests have little meaning.
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	<p>3) Table 5 should be revised so that “type of noodles” could be easily understood by international readers. I don’t get how this categorization was done. Also, please provide a footnote what are uncommon and common brands.</p> <p>4) In the Discussion section on page 13, lines 31-32, the authors state that “evidence suggested that ...no reduction in sales”. Please add a reference.</p>
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VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer 1

Dear Dr Rodrigo Rodriguez-Fernandez,

The correction had been done as per suggested by Dr. Thank you for providing your insight and interest in our study. The correction and explanation had been done as below.

Page 2, line 26: (Correction done)

Page 3 line 8, would be good to include what percentage of the market the authors analysed, even if gross estimate. (Gross Estimation had been given. As no reference can be used to backup the number that we provide.)

Page 4, line 8, Important to signal WHO has identified salt reduction as a "best buy" if you are talking about cost effectiveness. (Yupe. We strongly agree on this statement and tried to emphasize on this.)

Page 4, line 12, Mention level for children. (Correction done)

Page 5, line 32, This line should go under limitations not in methods. (Correction done)

Page5, line 36, Do these have Zero salt? If so, then the tittle of the study is misleadings as it only includes Floured instant noodles. (According to “Know Your Noodles! Assessing Variations in Sodium Content of Instant Noodles across Countries”, they had grouped both flavoured noodles and non-flavoured noodles as instant noodles)

Page 7, line 22, There are noodles sold on websites but not at hypermarkets and retailer chains? This needs to be clarified. Was it because a lack of availability within the market? Etc (Clarification had been done as per suggested)

Page 10, Table 4, What’s the order of the noodle flours? Should be at least by sample size. Thank you for letting us know on this. The order of the noodles flavours is now arranged according to sample size. Thanks.

Page 11, Table 5, need to define what you mean by common. No definition in methods. (This was mentioned under Data Classification, Paragraph 2. Thanks)

Page 13, line 14, Important to comment where salt comes from within the Malay population. At the table, during cooking or from processed foods. (This study focused on the processed foods intake and Malaysian are known to be one of the top consumer of instant noodles. Reducing salt in instant noodles would directly reduce the amount of salt consumed by Malaysian)

Page 13, line 31, Provide reference (Done)

Page 14 line 31, This is a critical point of the study. If consumers did not enjoy low salt content noodles, there would not be any on the market, hence the incentive for gradual reformulation. (Our team strongly agree on this point. Emphasizes had been done.)

How many packaged noodles to people on average consumer per day in Malaysia? And if there is an age difference? This is relevant to the public health community as it will influence messaging strategies for the public. (This sort of study had not been done in Malaysia and we hope that our study would create interest among more researchers and hopefully some will devote their time in researching on instant noodle consumption among Malaysians. Thanks for providing your brilliant insight which is crucial to this study. Thanks.)

Reviewer 2:

Dear Dr Bianca van der Westhuizen

Your suggestion had been taken into consideration. Substantial correction had been done on this. Our team are grateful on your insights and suggestion on our study. Thanks.

Reviewer 3:

Dear Dr Hidemi Takimoto,

Your suggestion had been taken into consideration. We had made some correction and improved the language so that it will be informative for international reader.

VERSION 2 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Bianca van der Westhuizen Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa
REVIEW RETURNED	23-Oct-2018

GENERAL COMMENTS	Thank you for re submitting your article. This looks much better. In my opinion this is valuable research that could be used to change policy around sodium intake in the country.f
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Correction: Salt content of instant noodles in Malaysia: a cross-sectional study

Tan CH, Chow ZY, Ching SM, *et al.* Salt content of instant noodles in Malaysia: a cross-sectional study. *BMJ Open* 2019;9:e024702. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2018-024702.

This article was previously published with an error in the co-author affiliation.

The correct affiliations for Chia Yook Chin are
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BMJ Open 2019;9:e024702corr1. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2018-024702corr1

