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Introduction from Professor Graham MacGregor, Chairman of CASH

CASH brought together all of the experts on salt and blood pressure in the UK, with the aim of bringing about a gradual reduction in salt intake, based on the evidence that our high salt intake is the major cause of raised blood pressure. We hope you enjoy our newsletter.

Best wishes



CASH News

We are pleased to announce the promotion of Hannah Brinsden to Nutritionist, and of Katharine Jenner to Campaign Director. We are very grateful to The Marcela Trust and British Heart Foundation for their continuing support of CASH.

Thank you to the Queen Mary web team who redesigned our website, improving the content, navigation and functionality www.actiononsalt.org.uk. They are now starting work on our WASH website. We also received a welcome Google Grant to enable us to promote our new website through search optimisation.

National Salt Awareness Week 2011

Salt and Men's Health



Salt and Men's Health was selected as the topic for Salt Awareness Week 2011 as a result of UK research which showed that more men die prematurely of cardiovascular disease (CVD) than women; CVD accounts

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for 29% of preventable deaths in men compared to 21% in women. The research shows that men eat more salt than women and on average have a higher blood pressure than women, particularly at a younger age, and are less likely to have their blood pressure measured, to take action to reduce it when it is raised or to take blood pressure lowering drugs.

CASH held a reception at the House of Commons for MPs, Peers, NGOs, Department of Health and members of the food industry on Monday 21st March at 4pm. We are very thankful to for some insightful speeches from our speakers for this year's event: Professor Graham MacGregor, Chairman of CASH, David Amess MP, event sponsor, Anne Milton MP, Public Health Minister and Peter Baker, Chief Executive of Men's Health Forum.

[Click here for the full transcript of the speeches](#)

Thank you to Heinz, Lo Salt, Marks & Spencer, Mars, McCains, Morrison's, New Covent Garden, Pepsico, Sainsburys, The Cooperative, Waitrose and United Biscuits for their support of the Reception.

We were thrilled to have some high profile supporters such as **Levi Roots** - Celebrity Chef, *"This year let's all correct a fault and reduce our intake of salt; it's all about a healthier life style. One love."*

Antony Worrall Thompson - Celebrity Chef, *"I'm pleased that the effect of a high salt diet on men's health is being highlighted in Salt Awareness Week. I support this initiative and would urge the food industry to think about how much salt is added to our food."*

We were pleased to have support from 12 leading UK health charities:



There were over 500 supporting events around the country, in football clubs, schools, businesses, universities, doctor's surgeries and more displaying our poster and leaflets:



The Week saw more than 240 pieces of coverage, with an estimated reach of 43 million.



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We also conducted a public opinion survey as part of the Week, and found that **85% of men did not know they should be eating less than 6g of salt a day**, and as many as 1 in 10 men think they should eat 10g or more of salt per day*.

* All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2015 adults of which 922 were men. Fieldwork was undertaken between 28th - 31st January 2011. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

Consumer Action

Less Salt Please – Make a Pledge! We have had a great consumer response to our campaigns, and are helping the public speak up and ask for [Less Salt Please!](#) We are encouraging the general public to write to manufacturers & local restaurants if their food is too salty; ask for less salt when eating out; and to let us know if they come across products that are high in salt. We hope you will pass the message on! You can also find us on [Twitter](#).

Reaching the out of home sector is now a priority for CASH, given the lack of progress both in their foods and their labelling.



We will also be providing recipes for consumers to show how to cook good food without the need for salt or salty ingredients. A free [recipe booklet for men](#) is available to download online along with the first edition of our free [international low salt cookbook](#). A recipe kindly donated by Levi Roots has been included at the end of this newsletter.

CASH in the News

CASH has had a busy six months campaigning to reduce salt in our foods. This strategy is successful at not only raising public awareness of the salt content of the foods they are eating and the risks associated with excess salt consumption, but also of stimulating food companies to reformulate products to contain less salt. Our research has featured in current affairs programs such as 'The Truth about Low Fat Foods' on BBC3 and has stimulated editorial and comments in the national press such as in the Guardian's editorial '[Britain's fried-chicken boom](#)'. We have continued to gain strong media support for our surveys, reaching millions of people.

In time for Salt Awareness Week 2011, CASH found that a [pie and mash meal](#) from Wetherspoons contains a massive 7.5g of salt – 125% of the daily maximum recommendation of 6g. Men are putting their health at risk by eating the equivalent of 365 pints of salt in a lifetime, with as many as 1 in 10 men thinking they should eat 10g or more of salt per day. Wetherspoon responded by saying they are taking steps to reduce their salt content, and the highest salt meal does not feature on their current menu.

[Salty Valentine's Day meals](#) A Valentine's Day meal could contain more than an adult's recommended daily maximum of 6g of salt. Tesco's Finest 2 course meal contains 6.3g salt with the main course alone containing 4.3g. Eating out for Valentine's Day could result in you having more salt than is found in 15 packets of crisps.

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Roast Dinners with hidden salt A roast dinner could contain nearly 10g of salt! 160% of the maximum daily recommendation. A portion of a stuffed beef joint from ASDA was found to contain 2.3g, more than a third of your daily salt recommendation. Pre-prepared vegetables, potatoes, gravy and stuffing could each contain more than 1g of salt per portion.

Salty Coffee shop treats A hot beverage and a sweet treat can contain more than a third of your maximum daily salt recommendation. A Luxury fruit scone and a hot chocolate from Caffé Nero contain 2.43g of salt, equivalent to nearly 5 packets of crisps. The lack of nutrition information on packets and in store makes it difficult to make healthy choices.

Hospital food unfit for schools Nearly half of children's hospital main meals exceed school nutritional standards for salt or saturated fat. 1 in 3 of the surveyed items would have a red traffic light. A lasagne served in hospital contains 6 times more salt than one served in school. CASH and Sustain are calling for legal nutritional standards for all food served in public sector institutions.

Salt in your salad? A salad from EAT was found to contain 3.51g of salt; more than half of your 6g daily maximum for salt. 1 in 10 surveyed salads contain more salt than a Big Mac and only 6 salads contain less salt than a packet of crisps.



Salt in the News

The move of the Nutrition Division of the Food Standards Agency to the government's control at the Department of Health in June 2010 created a large amount of uncertainty about the future of the government's salt reduction policy.

CASH urged the Health Secretary Andrew Lansley to commit to the continuation of the salt reduction policy. The outcome came in March 2011 when the Department of Health launched the **Public Health Responsibility Deal**. Companies signing up to the deal have pledged to **reduce salt in their foods by 15% over the next 2 years** to meet the 2012 salt targets negotiated by CASH and the Food Standards Agency with the food industry in 2008. Although this should result in salt intakes coming down by 1 gram from the current intake of 8.6g to 7.6g in 2012, this is still a long way from the maximum 6g / day target and even further from the NICE maximum target of 3 g / day by 2025.



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Whilst it is disappointing not to have more challenging salt reduction targets, given that salt reduction is a simple and highly effective way of reducing the massive burden of blood pressure associated cardiovascular disease in the UK, CASH has supported the deal and is urging all food companies to [sign the pledge here](#). **The following companies have pledged to reduce salt:**

ASDA, Aldi Stores, Alliance Boots, apetito, Associated British Foods, Association of Cereal Food Manufacturers, Aunt Bessies Limited, Bella Italia, Booker Group plc, Burton's Foods, Cafe Rouge, Compass Group, CASH, Co-operative Group, Costa, Ferrero, General Mills UK, Greene King plc, Heinz, Indulgence Patisserie, Initial Catering Services (Autograph), ISS Facility Services – Food and Hospitality and Healthcare, JD Wetherspoon, Kelloggs, Kraft Foods, Marks & Spencer, Mars, Marston's, McCain Foods Ltd, Midcounties Co-operative, Morrisons Supermarkets, Nestle, OCS Group, PepsiCo, Pizza Express, Premier Foods, Produced in Italy, Punch Pub Company, Sainsbury's Supermarket, 7 Day Catering Ltd, Sodexo, Strada, Subway, Tesco, Unilever UK Ltd, United Biscuits, Waitrose, Warburtons, Weetabix, Whitbread Group, Yo Sushi.

Congratulations are due to these companies for their commitment to public health. We look forward to hearing that more companies have signed up to salt reduction soon!

Science News

Blood flow in the body's main arteries is significantly reduced within half an hour of eating just one meal high in salt. The paper *Endothelial function is impaired after a high-salt meal in healthy subjects*, published by Dickenson *et al* in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, showed blood flow was 'significantly more impaired' within 30 minutes of eating the salty meal than the low-salt alternative and the restriction reached a peak after an hour. The study showed that an amount of salt similar to that in a commonly eaten meal impairs blood flow in healthy men and women. Doctors found arteries rapidly lost some of their ability to pump blood because of the damaging effects of salt and thought it to be a very early sign of heart disease. The research calls for the mechanisms to be investigated more intensively.

Sugar-sweetened beverage, sugar intake of individuals and their blood pressure: Intermap study Ian J. Brown *Soft drinks and blood pressure*. In a study of over 2,500 people, CASH member Paul Elliott has found that drinking more than 355ml a day of sugar-sweetened fruit juice or carbonated drink can be enough to upset the balance. In the study, the link between sugary drinks and higher blood pressure was especially strong in people who consumed a lot of salt as well as sugar. A higher sugar-sweetened beverage intake, by 1 serving/day (355 ml/24-h), was associated with systolic/diastolic BP differences of +1.6/+0.8 mm Hg (both $P < 0.001$); +1.1/+0.4 mm Hg ($P < 0.001 / < 0.05$) with adjustment for weight and height.



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Study questions benefit of low salt diet, experts quick to dismiss.

A recent paper in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* claimed that a lower salt intake was associated with a higher cardiovascular mortality in spite of a lower blood pressure. However, this study is seriously flawed and therefore cannot be used to refute the strong evidence that salt reduction is very beneficial to health and is one of the most cost-effective interventions to combat the pandemic of cardiovascular disease worldwide.

[Click here](#) for the commentary in the Lancet



WASH News

WASH membership has now grown to 410 individuals from 83 countries. New members include experts from: Bahrain, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Germany, India, Iran, Italy, Kenya, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and USA. WASH is pleased to support 'Groupe SALT' – the new French division of the World Action on Salt and Health. We are happy to welcome all new members, and encourage WASH members to spread the invitation to their international colleagues. Please email: c.e.farrand@qmul.ac.uk

World Salt Awareness Week 2011

World Salt Awareness Week was a fantastic success thanks to the hard work and dedication of our members. Countries around the world were invited to focus on the suggested theme; 'Salt and Men's Health' and/or tailor it to their own country's needs.

This year activities ranged from full day symposiums in Sweden to radio interviews in South Africa and the launch of a local project in Bulgaria to produce the first salt-free region in Varna.

World Salt Awareness Week provided a prime opportunity to deliver the important message of salt reduction and spur countries into action to reduce their salt intake by raising awareness of the importance of salt reduction.

Report on salt levels in pizzas around the world

WASH released a new report that revealed excessively high salt (sodium) levels in many pizzas around the world, with some pizzas containing twice the salt content of the same pizzas in other countries. WASH surveyed the salt and sodium content of over 500 pizza products available around the world from well known international pizza outlets such as Pizza Hut, Domino's, Eagle Boys and Papa John's, as well as those available in supermarkets and grocery stores.

[Click here](#) for the full report

[Click here](#) for full data



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International salt reduction papers

World Salt Awareness Week An editorial 'World Salt Awareness Week' published in The Journal of Clinical Hypertension by WASH details the important work on salt reduction carried out by countries across the globe, and the success of World Salt Awareness Week to date.

[Click here](#) to read the full editorial in The Journal of Clinical Hypertension

Interested in developing a national programme to reduce dietary salt?

WASH members Professor Norm Campbell, Professor Bruce Neal and WASH Chairman Professor Graham MacGregor have published a guidance framework on how to develop a national programme to reduce dietary salt. The manuscript outlines a sequence of steps that need to be taken, and provides suggestions on how to adapt to your national situation.

[Click here](#) for the paper in the Journal of Human Hypertension.

Salt Reduction Initiatives around the World.

New research conducted by Webster et al, to be published in the Journal of Hypertension shows 32 countries now have national programs to reduce population salt intake. Central to the success of these programs is the establishment of targets for the maximum amount of salt in different foods. The Canada, US and UK have set targets for over 80 different food categories.

[Click here](#) to access the Journal Article

Spotlight on Australia

In light of the new research conducted by Webster et al, in the Journal of Hypertension, Australia is highlighted as one country lagging behind in its approach to salt reduction. The research identifies that Canada, the US and the UK have set targets for over 80 different food categories. Australia only has 9. The George Institute, Sydney has recently announced 85 new salt targets for foods to give industry the direction they deserve.

Please [click here](#) for full news story

Please [click here](#) to view interim salt targets

The Australian Division of WASH (AWASH) continues to be very active in its national salt reduction strategy; issuing media releases to raise awareness and drive salt reduction. 'Bread bakers – salt shakers?' A survey carried out by The George Institute for Global health in November 2010 revealed that less than half of bread products sold in Australia have acceptable salt levels.

Please [click here](#) to view latest AWASH newsletter

International collaboration to monitor food data. The George Institute for Global Health, Sydney, is coordinating an international collaborative effort to collect information about the composition of processed foods in different countries around the world. The aim is to compare the nutrient content of major processed food categories against benchmarks, between countries, between companies and over time. This project represents a major step forward in the objective and transparent monitoring of industry and government commitments to improve the food supply.

Ital carrot and sweet potato soup (V)



Kindly provided by Levi Roots, celebrity chef and food entrepreneur from BBC's Dragon's Den. *"This year let's all correct a fault and reduce our intake of salt; it's all about a healthier life style. One love."*

This is one of my favourites and the sort of food I'd feed to my Rasta friends. It's completely ital and, if you're wondering what that is, 'ital' comes from 'vital', or natural. Make it as hot or mild as you like and change the vegetables according to the time of year. But keep it as pure as possible; I like it with no fat (though sometimes butter's hard to resist) and added onions.

Soup

Serves: 4

Prep time: 15–20 minutes

Cooking time: 10–15 minutes

- 1 litre carrot juice (I juice them fresh in a juicer)
- 2 sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 2cm chunks
- 1 x 400g can chickpeas, drained
- 4cm chunk of creamed coconut, from a block
- 1 small hot red chilli (ideally Scotch bonnet), chopped (seeds left in or removed, depending on how hot you like it)
- 2cm piece of fresh root ginger, very finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- Leaves from 2 sprigs of thyme, finely chopped
- Large handful of callaloo or spinach leaves, washed thoroughly, tough stalks removed (optional)
- Black pepper (optional)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh coriander leaves, to garnish
- Low fat sour cream or Greek yogurt, to serve (optional)

1 Put the carrot juice in a medium-sized saucepan and bring to the boil. Add the sweet potatoes, chickpeas, creamed coconut, chilli, ginger, garlic and thyme.

2 Simmer gently, covered, for 10 minutes or until the potato is soft. Shred the callaloo or spinach, if using, and add to the soup 5 minutes before the end of cooking time. Leave the soup chunky or smash up the chickpeas and sweet potato with a potato masher if you want. (Adjust the consistency of the soup to taste with a little extra carrot juice or stock if you decide to mash it, as it will become very thick.)

3 Season with black pepper, if liked, and garnish with fresh coriander. Serve each bowl with a blob of sour cream or Greek yogurt on top, if liked.

Nutritional information per serving



Caribbean Food Made Easy by Levi Roots is published by Mitchell Beazley (Octopus Publishing)

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