

Legislation — impact and trends in nutrition labeling: A global overview

Abstract

The need for accurate nutrition labeling on food products has never been greater. Obesity has assumed near-epidemic levels in both industrialized and emerging nations in recent years, and governments and consumer groups around the world are looking for ways to improve the nutritional choices for their citizenry while simultaneously balancing their freedom of choice through the use of nutrition labeling. Despite increasingly aggressive efforts by government and industry organizations to raise consumer awareness, though, many consumers either do not consult nutrition labels or they are not in a position to interpret the information on these labels accurately. To gain some fresh insights into nutrition labeling practices worldwide, this paper provides a review of the relevant peer-reviewed, scholarly, and government literature to describe regulations enacted to date, evolving and future trends, and the likely impact of food product labels. In this regard, the paper highlights similarities and discrepancies that exist, identifies gaps, and gives directions for the future.