

A survey of nutrition labelling on packaged foodstuffs sold in Malawi: Manufacturer practices and legislative issues

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyse nutrition labelling practices in Malawi to identify opportunities for improvement. A series of food categories were surveyed at random from different manufacturers to capture relevant packaging data which was analysed using SPSS Version 13.0. In addition, the survey recorded provision of claims on products, types of claims made and conformity to the current regulations, which was assessed by examining whether or not claims provided followed the specifications of the Codex Guidelines for Use of Nutrition and Health Claims. The results of the study showed that Malawi had the lowest percentage of products carrying nutrition information for all of the countries surveyed. The results also showed that consumers were confronted with a broad range of processed foods on the Malawian market, more than half of which made nutrition claims but failed to provide any corresponding nutrition information. The study also determined that compliance rates with Codex requirements for nutrition labelling and use of claims on products varied significantly, with Malawi comparing unfavourably with other countries in Southern Africa. The context of these findings and their implications for the future are discussed in the study's conclusion.