SIMPLE Modules



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What is already known on this topic

Problem

- To evaluate effectiveness of policy action, it is essential to increase comparability of data across surveys, age groups, and countries.
- Use of different survey instruments creates a challenge for comparing dietary and physical activity (PA) behaviours and their determinants in pan-European surveillance and monitoring systems¹⁻³.

Solution

- Short and unified questionnaire modules measuring key health indicators.
- To improve and sustain comparability of data across EU surveillance systems, countries and age groups.
- To facilitate evaluation of temporal and regional changes in health behaviours, and their determinants at the population level.



Figure 1. Overview of all SIMPLE modules⁴

What this study adds

Children & Adolescents Adults **Public policy** Public policy The government ensures that there The government ensures that there are clear, consistent policies are clear, consistent policies, which (including nutrition standards) can be feasibly implemented, in which can be feasibly implemented other public sector settings for food in schools and early childhood service activities (canteens, food at education services for food service events, fundraising, promotions, activities (canteens, food at events, vending machines, public fundraising, promotions, vending procurement standards etc.) to provide and promote healthy food machines etc.) to provide and promote healthy food choices. choices. Community Neighbourhood healthy food Exposure to food adverts for unhealthy food and beverages availability through all media and marketing Organizational Portion size from manufacturers and food outlets in settings

Figure 2. The Food Provision module⁴

and vegetable intake, portions per day

Provision of SIMPLE (Selected Instruments for Multilevel PoLicy and impact Evaluation) Modules (Fig. 1) allowing

- The measurement of indicators of individual PA and dietary behaviour.
- The alignment to determinants of these behaviours from a policy, community and organizational level (Fig. 2).

Multilevel modules (Fig. 2; green)

- Different variables measuring determinants of behaviour are currently used in EU surveillance systems.
- To evaluate outcomes related to policy actions influencing individual and population behaviour.

Individual level modules (Fig. 2; orange)

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- Starting point for harmonization.
- To be integrated into current survey instruments used by surveillance systems.

Example: Survey question from WHO STEPS for ,Fruit intake': In a typical week, on how many days do you eat fruit? [days per week] How many servings of fruit do you eat on one of those days? [servings/ days]

Recommendations for further steps

- 1. SIMPLE Modules provide first steps towards a harmonised European surveillance and should be implemented in ongoing surveillance systems during a consultative process.
- 2. The modules support a consolidated approach to provide comparable health indicators and the evaluation of population's adherence to health recommendations and the impact of health policies.
- 3. Piloting and stepwise scaling-up of SIMPLE Modules should start in surveillance systems that expressed interest in implementing one or more modules.
- 4. Surveillance systems can introduce the individual level questionnaire items in voluntary modules or in sub-samples, or pilot the instruments in national surveys without discarding existing instruments.
- 5. A methodological competence platform to guide the process and methodological advancement of SIMPLE Modules will be established.
- 6. Further studies investigating validity and reliability of questionnaire items in different age-groups and evaluating their suitability to monitor WHO recommendations are needed.

Scan for further information



Literature references

¹ Hebestreit, A. et al. (2019). https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30888434/; Garnica Rosas, L., et al. (2021). https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33794923/;

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