

An Online Randomized
Controlled Trial Comparing
Front-of-package Nutrient
Labels on Consumer
Understanding, Perceptions,
and Behavior

PRESENTER: Brittany Lemmon
CO-AUTHORS: Anna H Grummon, Alejandra
Marquez, Lisa M Soederberg Miller, Lauren E
Au, Susan D Brown, Aijia Wang, Lisa M Powell,
Jennifer Falbe

BACKGROUND

- Packaged foods are the source of most added sugars, sodium, and saturated fat (“nutrients of concern”)
- Overconsumption of nutrients of concern increases chronic disease risk
- Front-of-package labels (FOPLs) are a promising intervention to inform consumers and promote public health
- Unlike many other countries, the US does not have a mandatory FOPL
- In January 2025, FDA published a proposed rule for a mandatory FOPL
- There is a need to test FDA’s label (Nutrition Info %DV) against other FOPL schemes (e.g., High In)

METHODS

- Large online RCT with 5 conditions: No-label control and 4 FOPL schemes (center panel)
- Participants viewed real products labeled according to assigned scheme
- Outcomes: Consumer understanding of nutrient profiles and content, perceived healthfulness of unhealthy products, and food selections in a shopping task

A **Multi High In** front-of-package label resulted in a **high level of consumer understanding**, helped consumers make **quick assessments**, and **healthier food selections**.

Multi High In

The image shows a box of Healthy Choice Café Steamers Beef Teriyaki. The box is orange and white with a picture of the food. Two black labels with white text are overlaid on the box. The top label says 'HIGH IN SODIUM' and the bottom label says 'HIGH IN ADDED SUGARS'. Both labels have 'FDA.org' at the bottom.

Nutrition Info %DV (FDA's label)

The image shows the FDA's Nutrition Info %DV label. It is a white label with black text. The top line says 'Nutrition Info'. Below that, it says 'Per serving %Daily Value'. The label lists three nutrients: Saturated Fat (8% Med), Sodium (20% High), and Added Sugars (22% High). The label has 'FDA.gov' at the bottom.

Nutrition Info Red

The image shows the Nutrition Info Red label. It is a white label with black text. The top line says 'Nutrition Info'. Below that, it says 'Per serving'. The label lists three nutrients: Saturated Fat (Med), Sodium (High), and Added Sugars (High). The label has 'FDA.gov' at the bottom.

High In

The image shows the High In label. It is a white label with black text. The top line says 'High In'. Below that, it lists two nutrients: Sodium and Added Sugars. The label has 'FDA.gov' at the bottom.

No-Label Control

The image shows a box of Healthy Choice Café Steamers Beef Teriyaki without any labels. The box is orange and white with a picture of the food.

RESULTS

- N=13,929 adults approximating US distributions of sex, education, race and ethnicity, and age
- All FOPL schemes substantially improved consumer understanding and behavior compared to control
- **Nutrition Info Red** and **Multi High In** outperformed **Nutrition Info %DV** in consumer understanding outcomes
- **Nutrition Info Red** tended to have higher perceived healthfulness of unhealthy products relative to control and other schemes
- **Multi High In** significantly reduced the risk of participants selecting a high-in food for themselves in a shopping task
- **Multi High In** produced the fastest response times, while **Nutrition Info %DV** resulted in the slowest

TAKEAWAY

The FDA’s label tended to underperform and, based on these results, a **Multi High In** scheme, which is already implemented in many Latin American countries, should be considered in the design of a mandatory FOPL.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: This research was jointly supported by Healthy Eating Research, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and grant 2020–85774 from Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Food Policy Program (www.bloomberg.org). S.D. Brown also received support from National Institutes of Health grants K26 DK138246 and P30 DK092924.