

Letter to the Editor

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Using nutrient profiling to prevent misleading food marketing

Madam

Lyndal Wellard *et al.* remind us that marketing products with fruit and vegetable claims is inaccurate and potentially misleading if they do not meet nutrient profiling criteria⁽¹⁾. In a sample of products advertised on television in Spain, in 2008, we found that 52 % and 57 % of foods and beverages carrying nutrient and health claims, respectively, were for less healthy products, according to the UK Nutrient Profile Model⁽²⁾. To prevent the confusion this phenomenon may create among consumers, European legislation stated that, by 2009, the Commission shall establish specific criteria that shall be respected for the use of nutrition and health claims on foods⁽³⁾. However, the 2011 European legislation on food labelling not only did not address any such criteria, but also failed to introduce front-of-pack traffic light food labels, favouring vested interests of the food industry, which spent 1 billion Euros in a lobby campaign opposing such a labelling scheme⁽⁴⁾. Today, we are still waiting for nutrient profiling regulation. If we are to allow consumers make informed food choices, front-of-pack labels have to be introduced

and standard criteria for communicating nutrient profiles should be required for products containing nutrient or health claims.

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