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**Nutrient profiling systems: Use in Australasia and an example from the Supermarket Healthy Options Project (SHOP)**

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**Background** – Nutrient profiling systems are becoming increasingly popular in nutrition research. They can be used to develop new foods, to assess the nutrient quality of food purchases and intakes, and to rank foods into groups to indicate their relative healthiness. Ranking foods provides researchers and consumers with an indication of the contribution a food might make to a healthy, balanced diet.

**Objectives** – To examine nutrient profiling systems developed and used in the Australasian region and to describe the development and use of the nutrient profiling system for the Supermarket Healthy Options Project (SHOP) in New Zealand (NZ).

**Design** – A review of the published English language literature using key electronic databases was completed to locate relevant articles. Key informants were also consulted and a hand search performed of the bibliographies of retrieved articles. The profiling system for use in the SHOP study was developed in partnership with the National Heart Foundation Pick the Tick programme and using the National Food and Nutrition Guidelines for NZ.

**Outcomes** – Several nutrient profiling systems have recently been developed and used in the Australasian region, including the Unilever system, and the New South Wales and NZ school food and beverage classification systems for canteens. Nutrient profiling systems are unique and each assesses or groups foods differently. The SHOP nutrient profiling system was successfully developed and used to place foods into healthy and less healthy groups that were in turn the basis of a tailored nutrition education programme.

**Conclusion** – Nutrient profiling systems provide researchers and consumers with a helpful tool to compare the relative healthiness of foods. However, to ensure consumers receive a consistent message, it may be necessary to consider a more harmonised approach to developing and using nutrient profiling systems in the future.

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