

Editor's note

Against the background of intense debate on the prevention of obesity and chronic diseases, the year started with the release, of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*.¹ These recommendations “accommodate the food preferences, cultural traditions and customs of the many and diverse groups who live in the United States”.

Among the recommendations, emphasis is afforded to:

- Maintaining long-term energy balance, to attain and maintain a healthy body weight.
- Consuming nutrient-dense foods and beverages.
- Limiting the daily sodium consumption to less than 2 300 mg, with high-risk groups advised to consume less than 1 500 mg.
- Restricting the percentage of energy derived from saturated fats to less than 10%.
- Consuming less than 300 mg of dietary cholesterol daily.
- Replacing refined grains with whole grains.
- Restricting consumption of solid fats and added sugars.
- Limiting alcohol to one and two drinks per day, respectively, for women and men.
- Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Replacing some meat and poultry with seafood.

Not surprisingly, the recommendations have already been criticised as not meeting evidence-based standards and being of “as much a political as scientific nature”. There is also concern regarding the apparent lack of evidence for concluding that “this dietary pattern will produce health benefits”.² No doubt the debate will evolve, particularly since the call has been made to move “the process of creating the guidelines to an independent agency”.

On the home front, an SAJCN survey was conducted in 2010 at the SASPEN and ADSA/NSSA congresses to obtain some feedback from our readers. Congress delegates were asked to complete a feedback form to determine our readers’ needs for and opinions of the SAJCN in order to continue improving the reach, content and usefulness of the journal. It was encouraging to note that, of those that completed the survey ($N = 80$; hence the findings should be interpreted in that context), 78% indicated that they enjoyed reading the SAJCN. Thirty-six per cent, 47% and 13% of survey participants indicated that they read some, most or all of the SAJCN, respectively. Seventy-eight per cent of participants wanted to continue receiving the SAJCN. The majority of readers (59%) indicated that they completed the CPD activities in the journal, making this a valuable feature. General comments varied and were mostly related to the type of articles

published in the SAJCN – these and all other comments are being analysed by the editorial team to improve future issues of the journal. The majority of participants (61%) liked and valued the feature of online notification of new issues.

It is also appropriate in this first SAJCN 2011 issue to express a very special word of appreciation to all our reviewers who not only contributed to shortening the time to publication of manuscripts, but also helped improve and guard the SAJCN review standards. The support of the following colleagues is greatly acknowledged:

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References

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2. Hite AH. Is the science behind the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans “unquestioned”? *Nutrition*. 2011;27:385-386.