

## Book Reviews

**Monitoring and evaluation of mental health policies and plans** (World Health Organization, Geneva) 2007. 163 pages. Price: CHF 20.00/US \$ 18.00; in developing countries: CHF 14.00/US \$ 12.60 ISBN 9789241547154

Monitoring and evaluation of a country's health policies and plans are vital for improving services, treatment and care and for guiding future policy directions. In this respect, mental health is a part of national health policy. This guidance package is prepared jointly by Professor Melvyn Freeman, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, South Africa, and Michelle Funk, Co-ordinator, Mental Health Policy and Service Development and Benedetto Saraceno, Director, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, WHO.

The module is a part of the WHO Mental Health Policy and Service Guidance Package and it is hoped to assist policy makers and planners by effective monitoring and evaluation of mental health policy and plans. The module is intended to be used either individually or as a package. It can also serve as a part of training package for policy makers and planners, and as a framework for technical consultancy. The package is intended to help in the complex process of monitoring and evaluation.

A mental health policy of any country provides the direction for mental health by defining "a vision, values and principles and by establishing a broad model for action" to achieve that vision. To translate that vision into an action, the policy should have a plan, that details the strategies and activities. Basically any mental health plan has two aspects (*i*) it provides a model of an intended future situation, and (*ii*) it details a programme of action pre-determined to achieve the intended situation. To make the planning purposeful, monitoring and evaluation are key elements of policy development. In this context, it is important to mention that monitoring and evaluation

is not a one time activity but it should be necessary at four distinct stages. First, at the time of developing the policy and plan and its content. Second, the plan should be monitored to ensure that its implementation proceeds according to a defined set of activities, timetable and budget and to assess whether the outputs are being realized. Third, if the plan is not being implemented as intended, necessary evaluation may be needed to understand the reasons for this. Fourth, at the end of a policy period, to assess whether the objectives set have been realized fully or partially.

There are many ways and techniques of doing evaluation. It could be quantitative or qualitative and sometimes both. The monograph in the first chapter brings out the aspects of mental health policy and plans requiring evaluation. It also briefly mentions about the common research methods for evaluating mental health policy and plan that require careful evaluation. Three important aspects of a policy and plan that require evaluation are: (*i*) the development process and the merit and the value of the policy, (*ii*) implementation of the plan, and (*iii*) the extent to which the policy objectives are achieved. The first chapter revolves around these three issues.

The second chapter addresses the "Framework for Setting up and Conducting the Evaluation of the Policy and Plan". It describes five steps, which include (*i*) the purpose and scope of the monitoring and evaluation, (*ii*) identify the evaluators and funding for the evaluation, (*iii*) assess and manage ethical issues, (*iv*) prepare and implement the operational plan, and (*v*) and finally analyze evaluation data.

The third chapter deals with various steps from developing the policy and plan of the country to evaluate the policy objectives. This is the longest chapter and could be a helpful exercise to both health planners and evaluators. A useful part of this monograph is inclusion

of three annexures. Annexure I provides a check-list for evaluating a mental health policy, Annexure II includes a check-list for evaluating mental health plan, and Annexure 3 is an WHO Assessment Instrument for Mental Health Systems.

Interestingly, Annexure 3 gives basic 10 recommendations earlier made in the World Health Report 2001 and addresses essential aspects of mental health systems development. The monograph ends with a list of further reading, which is not very carefully selected and could have included the work done in different regions of the WHO and many developing countries. Evaluation of any plan should also include the reasons for the delays and poor implementation. For this, it could have been useful to identify the possible barriers and suggest solutions to implement. A good monitoring and assessment is basically the identification and careful analysis of a variety of factors that might influence the evaluation process and its final implementation. The monograph lacks in some of these issues which are commonly encountered in the planning and evaluation process.

On the whole, the modules provided in the monograph should be of interest to various government departments at Federal, State and local levels. Similarly, it can also be useful as a training package for policy makers, planners and others involved in the field of mental health planning.

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**Evaluation of certain food additives and contaminants**, Sixty-eighth Report of Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (World Health Organization, Geneva) 2008. 238 pages. Price: CHF/US \$ 40.00; in developing countries: CHF/US \$ 28.00  
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The sixty eighth meeting of the joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives was held at Geneva from June 19-28, 2007. This meeting was convened to evaluate the safety of various food additives including flavouring agents in order to recommend acceptable daily intakes (ADIs) and to prepare specifications for identification and purity. The Committee also evaluated the risk posed by two food contaminants namely, aflatoxin and ochratoxin

A to recommend risk management options in order to protect public health.

The publication begins with a very brief introduction and declaration of interests. Chapter two is titled as general considerations with nine sections. The section two contains information on principal achievements of thirty-ninth session of Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants (CCFAC). This was the first meeting after the split of CCFAC into two committees, one for food additives (CCFA) and another for contaminants in food (CCCF). The third section gives the references to principles governing the toxicological evaluation of compounds. Section five discusses the safety evaluation of flavouring agents under various headings namely dietary exposure estimates, development of the Single Portion Exposure Technique (SPET), criteria to identify flavouring agents of potential concern, data on their usage levels, comparison of dietary estimates from the SPET with Maximized Survey Derived Intake (MSDI) and consideration of combined dietary exposure estimates. The recommendation made was that the assessment of combined dietary exposure for flavouring agents should be undertaken for agents that share a common metabolite and are members of a homologous series. Section six discusses whether an ADI allocated to an additive obtained from specific source and/or by specific manufacturing process can be applied to similar additives obtained by other means or from other sources.

The committee was of the opinion that it is necessary to compare source, method of manufacture and composition of the new product with the product tested originally for toxicity and for which the ADI was originally allocated.

Section seven emphasizes the need to develop guidelines for safety evaluation of enzymes produced by genetically modified microorganisms, and section eight has brought forth an important point that agents used for flavouring and as additives should conform to specifications in both the food additives format and the flavouring agent format. The committee agreed to review in future deliberations, whether any substantial differences exist between the two sets of specifications and to make revisions as and when necessary. The ninth section has listed withdrawal of specification for the food additives namely anisyl acetone, furfural and zeaxanthin rich extract from *Tagetes erecta*.

The third chapter deals with the safety evaluations and revision of specification for specific food additives other than flavouring agents. Section one lists nine

additives that were evaluated; of which asparaginase from *Aspergillus oryzae*, cyclotetraglucose, magnesium sulphate and sodium iron (III)- (EDTA) have been evaluated for the first time.

The other additives that were re-evaluated are acidified sodium chlorite, carrageenan and processed *Eucheuma* seaweed, isoamylase from *Pseudomonas amyloclavata*, phospholipase A1 from *Fusarium venenatum* produced by *Aspergillus oryzae* and steviol glycosides. The second section discusses the food additives that were considered for specifications only. These were maltol and ethyl maltol, nisin, pectins, polyvinyl alcohol and sucrose esters of fatty acids.

Chapter four gives detailed account of flavouring agents evaluated by the procedure for the safety evaluation of flavouring agents and specifications of purity for flavouring agents. Section one has covered eight groups of flavouring agents. In the application of the procedure, the chemical was first assigned to a structural class as identified by the committee at its forty-sixth meeting. The three classes I, II and III have been defined. The class I flavouring agents have simple chemical structure and low toxicity by oral route. The class II agents have features that are less innocuous than those of class I which however, do not suggest toxicity. The class III agents have structural characteristics that permit no initial presumption of safety or may even suggest toxicity. Therefore, the key element of the procedure would involve determining whether a flavouring agent and the product(s) of its metabolism are innocuous and / or endogenous substances. Figure I gives the decision tree approach used in the evaluation. Tables 2-11 excluding Table 8 summarise the results of safety evaluations of all the classes of flavouring agents. Table 8 gives the annual volumes of production of aliphatic acetals used as flavouring agents in Europe, USA and Japan.

The second section of fourth chapter briefly mentions the revision of existing specification for flavouring agents. Overall this chapter is a very exhaustive one covering all aspects of safety evaluation of the additives used as flavouring agents. The tables included in the chapter gives all the necessary information in nutshell.

Chapter five has dealt with two contaminants namely aflatoxins and ochratoxin A in two major sections. Section one has eight subsections and section two has eleven subsections. The topics covered in section one are brief introduction to the problem of

aflatoxin contamination and ends with a note stating that the risk posed by aflatoxins has been unequivocally substantiated and therefore was not considered for assessment of toxicity by the present Committee. Subsections two to eight deal with a variety of topics ranging from analytical methods, sampling protocols, effect of processing, aflatoxin occurrence and levels in food commodities particularly tree nuts, assessment of dietary exposure from tree nuts and other foods, effect of hypothetical maximum levels in almonds, brazil nuts, hazel nuts, pistachios and dried figs on dietary exposure. Table 13 shows statistics on impact of different hypothetical levels on world trade. Tables 14-16 provide summary of mean overall estimates of dietary exposure from various foods.

The second section of fifth chapter starts with introduction to ochratoxin, its toxicity and evaluation. The other sections give an account of absorption, distribution, metabolism and excretion; toxicological data; observations in humans; analytical methods; sampling protocols; effects of processing; prevention and control and dietary exposure assessment.

The dietary exposure assessment has detailed several aspects namely analysis of data submitted, estimation of the levels of ochratoxin A in cereals, various methods of calculating the average level of contamination, impact of new data on estimates of dietary exposure to ochratoxin A and a final note on the evaluation of ochratoxin A.

Chapter six has listed the agenda of future work to be done by the Committee. Chapter seven is brief summarizing the recommendations, the noteworthy being emphasis on need for harmonized sampling plants, both between different countries and within the same country. The reference section has an impressive list of 57 citations. There are four annexures which support statements made in relevant chapters.

Annexure 1 is a compilation of reports and other documents of previous meetings of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives. Annexure 2 gives ADIs, other toxicological information and information on specifications. Annexure 3 has listed three additives for which further information is required. Annexure 4 gives summary of safety evaluation of secondary components for flavouring agents with minimum assay values of less than 95 per cent.

The Report is concise and covers all details and information on some of the food additives and two most important contaminants. It will be of great reference

value to manufacturers, regulatory authorities and other concerned with food industry. The Report has many abbreviations almost in every page and some of them are less familiar. A list of abbreviations with their expanded form either in the beginning or at the end could have been included.

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