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## Evaluating compliance of UK baby food products with WHO Nutrient and Promotion Profile Model (NPPM) guidelines

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There is growing international concern about the suitability of certain commercial food products for infants and young children (FIYC) in Europe, especially those high in free sugars or marketed for infants under 6 months of age. Current regulatory guidelines are outdated and insufficient, resulting in the marketing and sale of unsuitable products. The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed the Nutrient and Promotion Profile Model (NPPM) to support Member States, industry, and policymakers in assessing the suitability of FIYC products. The NPPM provides nutrient and promotional requirements that can be adopted or adapted locally to evaluate product suitability, inform reformulation, and guide policy or legislative changes to promote optimal infant nutrition and development from 6 months to 3 years of age<sup>(1)</sup>. The aim of this study is to assess the compliance of FIYC products in the United Kingdom with the NPPM guidelines.

A comprehensive survey was conducted on commercially available FIYC products in the UK market, using the websites of four popular supermarkets (Tesco, Sainsbury's, Morrisons, ASDA). A total of 477 FIYC products from 22 brands, defined for the age range of 6–36 months, were identified between February and March 2023. Data on baby food products, including their nutritional composition, labelling information, and claims made by manufacturers, were collected from these websites in an Excel format and assessed using the NPPM website<sup>(2)</sup> to obtain results. The nutritional composition of baby food products, including energy, sugar, protein, and salt, was evaluated based on WHO guidelines. The labelling information, such as ingredient lists, nutrient content claims, breastfeeding recommendations, and health claims, were analysed for compliance with the guidelines.

Out of the 286 FIYC products that were assessed from 13 different brands, using the NPPM website, the results revealed that 74% of products passed the assessment for energy density, 80% for total fat, and 93% for total sugar evaluation. However, 68% of products did not pass the assessment for protein content, and the meals category, which included protein content stated in grams, had a high failure rate of 84%. Additionally, 34% of products failed the assessment for free sugar content. When it came to the lower age recommendation assessment, 81% of products passed. None of the products passed the assessment for claims related to marketing and promotion, and only 8% of products passed the assessment for breastfeeding instructions.

The study highlights UK FIYC product compliance with NPPM guidelines. High pass rates for energy, fat, and sugar, but concerns for protein, sugar, and breastfeeding. Compliance with claims on marketing, health, and nutrition composition was also low. Updated regulatory guidelines are needed to ensure the suitability of FIYC products and promote optimal infant nutrition and development in the UK market.

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### References

1. World Health Organisation (2022) *Nutrient and promotion profile model: supporting appropriate promotion of food products for infants and young children 6–36 months in the WHO European Region* [Available at: <https://www.who.int/europe/publications/item/WHO-EURO-2022-6681-46447-67287>].
2. Nutrient and Promotion Profile Model (NPPM) [Available at: <https://babyfoodnppm.org/assess/>].