



HKU nutrition scientist releases first report on Salt Content in Common Packaged Food Categories in Hong Kong and new food app to help Hongkongers make healthier food choices

April 16, 2018

The University of Hong Kong (HKU) and The George Institute for Global Health (the George Institute) have developed a mobile application which can show how healthy or unhealthy a product is just by scanning its barcode with a smartphone.

The free app highlights the fat, salt, sugar and energy content in a product, compares it with similar products, and offers up a healthier alternative when available.

The food app was first launched in Australia in 2012 by the George Institute and is now up and running in India, the UK, New Zealand, South Africa, China and America.

The Hong Kong app, developed by Dr Jimmy Louie, Assistant Professor in Food and Nutritional Science at the HKU School of Biological Sciences, contains a database of nearly 13,000 products sold in major supermarket chain stores with regular updates on the items.

Based on the data collected, researchers have produced the first report on salts levels in common processed foods in Hong Kong. High sodium intake in diet is considered a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease. In the report, four commonly consumed products – noodles, processed fish and meats and sauces – and over 2,000 food items were analysed. Items high in salt potentially bad to health were identified. Sodium content in products from the same food category were found to vary over a wide range.

Dr Jimmy Louie will announce the report findings and explain the features of the new food app in a media conference on April 17, 2018 (Tuesday).

Details of the media briefing are as follows:

Date: April 17, 2018 (Tuesday)

Time: 10:30 am

Venue: Room 6N-11, 6/F, Kadoorie Biological Sciences Building ([Map](#))

Dr Jimmy Louie's research interests span from public health nutrition and nutritional epidemiology to medical nutrition therapy and nutritional sciences. On the nutritional epidemiology side, Jimmy is experienced in performing secondary analyses on large cohort datasets and national nutrition surveys; on the public health nutrition side he was involved in projects related to front-of-pack labelling. He is also collaborating with the George Institute for Global Health to conduct research into the nutritional quality of the Australian and Hong Kong food supply.

The George Institute for Global Health conducts clinical, population and health system research aimed at changing health practice and policy worldwide. Established in Australia and affiliated with UNSW Sydney, the Institute today also has offices in China, India and the United Kingdom, and is also affiliated with Peking University Health Science Centre and the University of Oxford.

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