

The incorporation of ultra-processed food products and the continued evolution of front-of-pack nutrition labeling – Author's reply

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We appreciate Dr. Mialon's response¹ and agree that policies such as front-of-pack nutrition labelling (FOPNL) should improve as evidence and experiences evolve. However, claiming that "all existing FoPL models are reductionists" dismisses the article's main takeaway, which is to capture the development and progress of FOPNL in the Americas.

First, policy processes follow an evolutionary approach built on evidence and experience, seeking to improve every FOPNL, becoming better than the previous ones. This involves safeguarding processes and outcomes from industry interference (the real elephant in the room) and navigating gradual processes that are often not instantaneous.²

Second, while some FOPNL policies may be limited, recommended approaches such as the Pan American Health Organization Nutrition Profile Model (PAHO-NPM) have emerged to guide FOPNL policies and these guidelines continue to evolve.²⁻⁶ This includes components of ultra-processed products beyond their nutrient profile, which now enable countries to regulate ultra-processed products that were being exempted in previous experiences.²⁻⁶ Dr. Mialon points out the Chilean experience but ignores it preceded the PAHO-NPM and that its evidence was later used to further develop FOPNL in other countries like Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico.²⁻⁶

Third, referring to FOPNL as merely reductionist can favour the ultra-processed products industry's rhetorical playbook. The industry has a long history of divide-and-conquer strategies and uses this argument against these policies.

Taking an evolutionary and solidarity approach, policymakers, researchers, and civil society organizations

in the Americas continue to work towards providing populations with the best protection for healthy eating and public health.

Contributors

E.C. and F.G. prepared the first draft of the response letter. E.C., A.C., and F.G. contributed to subsequent drafts of the letter.

Declaration of interests

E.C., A.C. and F.G. have nothing to declare.

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