

# Whole Grains: A Game Changer 9 NOVEMBER 2021

## for Public and Planetary Health 2.00 PM (CET)

Can the Slovenian experience inspire Europe to address its leading dietary risk factor?

🐦 @eatwholegrains 📷 eatwholegrains



### POLICY SOLUTIONS TO SUPPORT WHOLE GRAIN UPTAKE ACROSS THE EU

15:15-15:25 **Whole grains and front-of-pack nutrition labelling: an opportunity to increase whole grain intakes?**

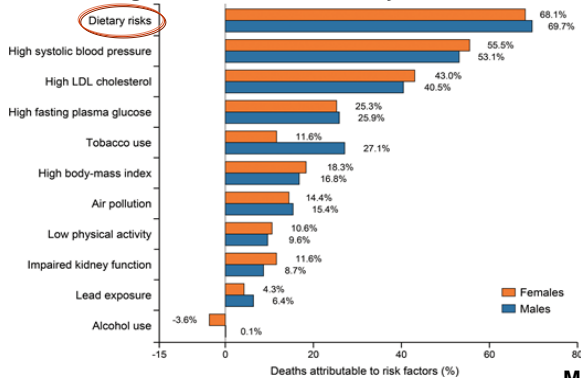


**ROBERTO VOLPE, MD, PhD** European Heart Network (EHN); Researcher at the National Research Council of Italy and Italian Society for Cardiovascular Prevention (SIPREC)



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**Percentage contributions of major risk factors for ischaemic heart disease age-standardized deaths by sex, 2017.** GBD 2017 Diet Collaborators, Lancet, 2019



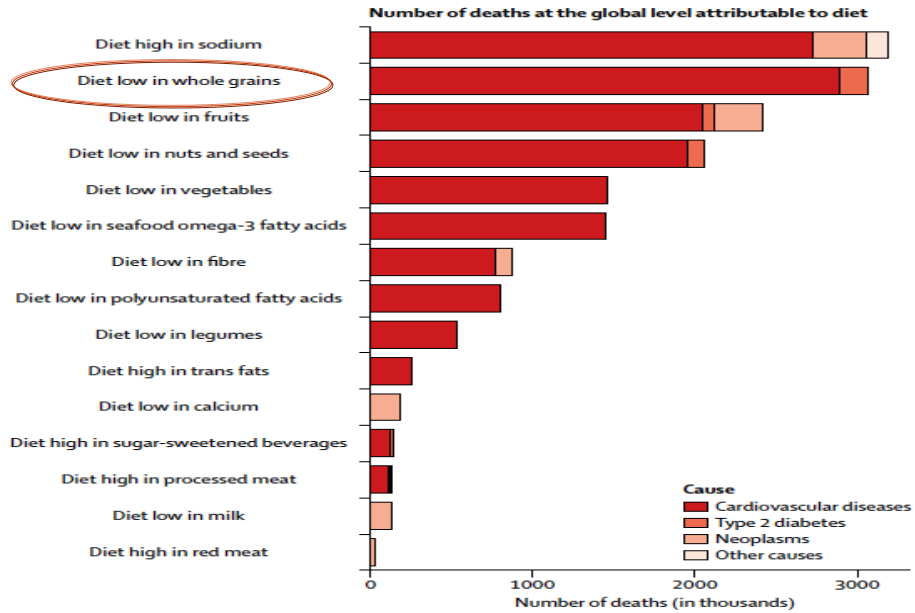
**Main causes of tumors**

(Anand, 2008)

Cause	%
<b>Nutrition / obesity</b>	30-35
Smoking	25-30
Infections	15-20
Geophysical factors (radiation)	<10
Genetics	5-10
Environmental pollution	
Sedentary life	

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**Health effects of dietary risks in 195 countries, 1990–2017:**  
a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017  
GBD 2017 Diet Collaborators, Lancet, 2019

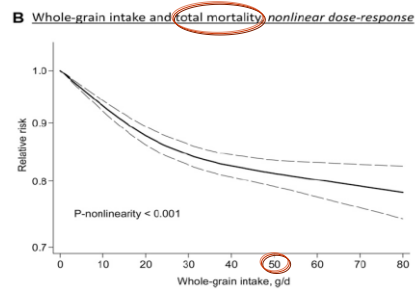
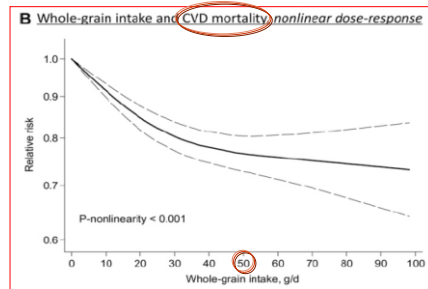
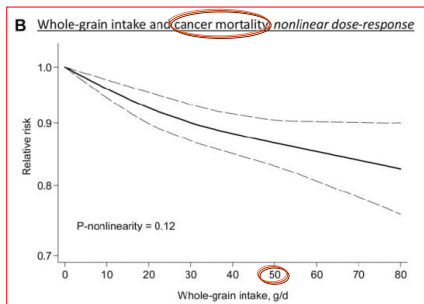


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**A diet rich in whole grains is protective**

**Whole-grain intake and cardiovascular, cancer, and total mortality (n. 104,061): a systematic review and meta-analysis of prospective studies (n. 13)**

Chen GC et al, Am J Clin Nutr 2016



**Suggested by EBM: about 50 grams of whole grain per day (about 100 g of WG food)**

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**Recommended intake of whole grains supported by evidence-based medicine: about 50g = 3 portions**

(Chen GC, Am J Clin Nutr 2016, Aune D, et al, BMJ 2016;353:l2716)

**1 portion = 16g of dry weight**

(US 2015 Dietary Guidelines)

1 slice of bread

3-4 crispbreads

half cup of breakfast cereals

80 g of pasta

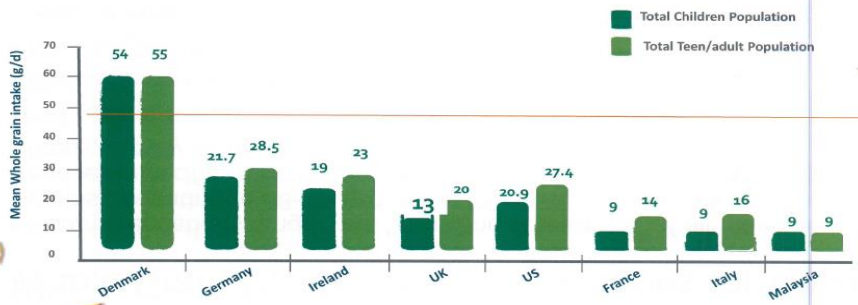
80 g of rice



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**Few people are achieving whole grain recommendations**

Global overview of the Whole Grain intakes (g/d) in Children & Teenagers



Mann et al 2015, Devlin et al 2013, Bellisle et al 2014, Sette et al 2015, Albertson et al 2016, AK et al 2015, Alexy et al 2010

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## Whole grains and front-of-pack nutrition labelling: an opportunity to increase whole grain intakes?

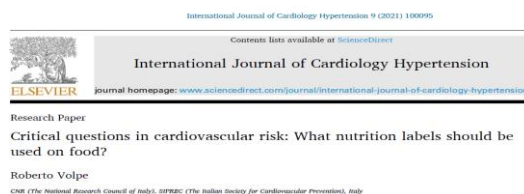
### Front of Pack Nutrition Labelling

Regulation (EU) No. 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union of **25 October 2011** pre-packed foods sold in the European Union must bear a nutrition declaration providing the product's energy value and the amounts of fats, saturated fats, carbohydrates, sugars, proteins and salt contained per 100 grams (if the product is solid) or 100 ml (if it is liquid).



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- People choose and **buy foods** depending on various factors, such as personal preferences, age, economic, socio-cultural position and price.
- In accordance with WHO and WHF, the **Front of Pack Nutrition Labelling (FOPNL)** can support an informed, healthier food purchase. The labels need to be **easy-to-read and to understand** independently of the consumer's cultural level.
- **A colored coding, logo, and key words** in addition to mandatory nutritional information could assist consumers in interpreting the nutritional composition of a food product **at a glance**, and in distinguishing between products belonging to the same category.



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## Endorsement (“Positive”) logos

The symbol is applied only to products deemed to be healthy using a **binary system** (positive/negative in light of their content of total fats, saturated fats, carbohydrates, sugar, fiber, salt). **Foods bearing these symbols have a high dietary fiber and whole grain content (or supply high levels of dietary fibre and whole grain)**



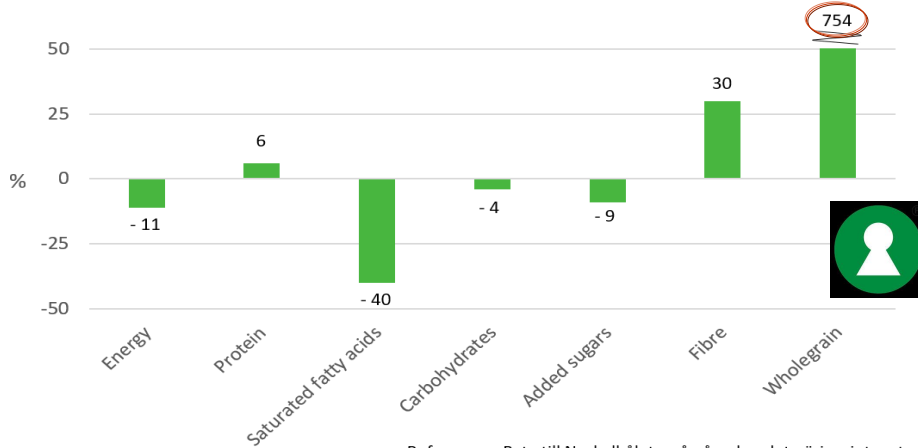
Denmark (Danish whole grain partnership 2014)

- The Whole Grain Partnership introduces the Fuldkorn logo which is a whole grain logo which can be put on products with a high whole grain content and low sugar, fat and salt contents.

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In 2015, the Swedish Food Agency conducted a study that aimed to calculate the **effects of marking** bread, pasta, cereals and breakfast cereals **with the Keyhole**.

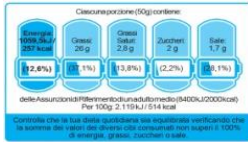
Choosing foods with the Keyhole logo – effect on nutrient intake



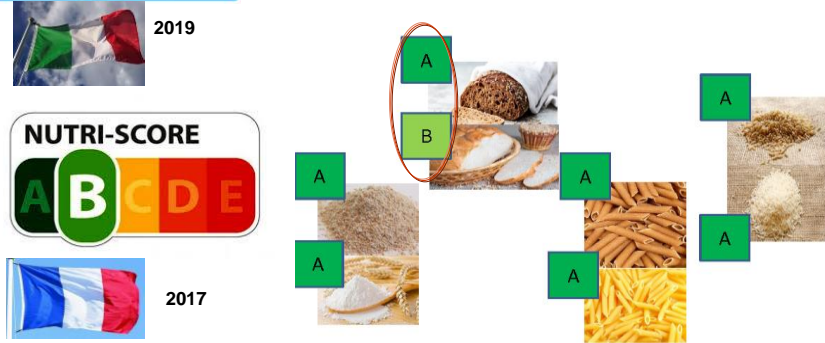
Reference : Byta till Nyckelhålet – så påverkar det näringsintaget. (Choosing foods with the Keyhole logo– effect on nutrient intake) Swedish Food Agency 2015

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## Nutrition labels don't always support whole grain intakes



The **Nutriform** underlines the importance of considering the quantity of the food recommended and the percentage of daily intake, but **doesn't provide guidance on how to interpret how healthy/unhealthy a product is.**



NS, that could be the more complete nutrition label (it converts the nutritional value of the calories, saturated fats, sugars, fibers, proteins, vegetables, fresh fruit, dry fruit and salt present in a food product into a numerical and color code rating), except for bread, **does not differentiate between refined and whole grain pasta or rice.**

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**MANDATORY NUTRITION LABELLING**

EHN Papers

- Consumer understanding of nutrition labelling (2003)
- 'Front of pack' nutrition schemes (2007)
- Consumer preferences and front of pack nutrition schemes (2008)

EU Regulation

- Food information to consumers (2011)



The time is ripe for simplified front-of-pack labelling  
29 November 2017



Food Policy Working Group

### OPEN LETTER ON THE INCLUSION OF WHOLE GRAIN IN THE PROPOSED HARMONISED MANDATORY FRONT-OF-PACK NUTRITION LABELLING FOR THE EU

"The integration of whole grain as a beneficial component into any FOPNL is possible, regardless of the preferred system.

... **to include whole grain in Nutri-Score** and how such inclusion would allow for a better association with overall dietary quality."

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"If I see the term whole grain in the packaging that usually gets my attention, but then I find **sugar and fats.**"

"It seems to be everything else, low sugar, low fat, ... **but you don't really see whole grain.**"



Most countries do not have a regulatory definition of whole grain foods. This results in confusion for the consumer.

**WHOLE GRAIN INITIATIVE**  
DEFINITION OF A WHOLE-GRAIN FOOD  
DEFINITION - INCLUDING REQUIREMENTS FOR DESIGNATING WHOLE GRAIN FRONT-OF-PACK

**I. Definition of a whole-grain food**  
A whole-grain food shall contain at least 50% whole-grain ingredients based on dry weight

However, the FOPNL has stimulated the **healthy reformulation by several food industries**, by increasing the availability, improving the appeal and the taste, and reducing the cost.



Volpe R\* and Maggi S. Nutrition Labelling: We Need a New European Algorithm. ES J Nutr Health. 2020; 1(2): 1010.

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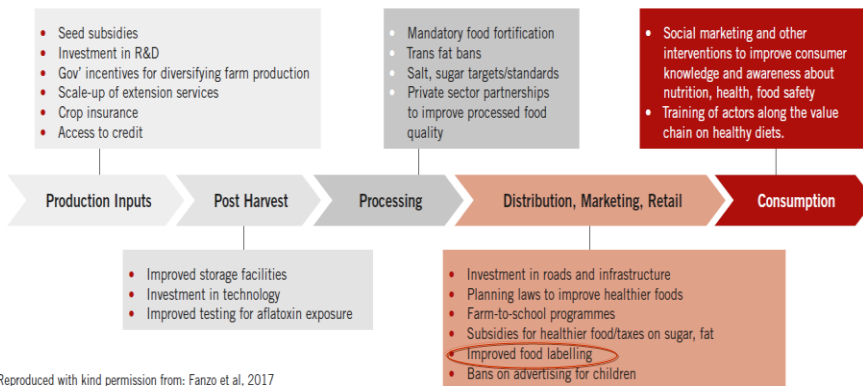


### Transforming European food and drink policies for cardiovascular health 2017

A European Heart Network paper<sup>1</sup>

#### Effective policies for promoting healthy dietary patterns

On the other hand, the complex situation also means that there are many different points along the food chain where policy makers can take action to improve diets (see figure below).



Reproduced with kind permission from: Fanzo et al, 2017

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