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Evaluating Health Canada's Proposed Front-of-Pack Labelling Policy: Burden of Healthcare Use Attributed to Health Canada's Proposed Front-of-Pack Labelling Policy

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The economic burden of disease due to consumption of poor diet costs billions of dollars annually to the Canadian health-care system. This project is in response to the growing interest in the use of nutrient profiling systems on front-of-package (FOP) nutrition labels in Canada. There is a high demand for simplified healthy eating messaging. Health Canada announced improving food environments is a priority in the Healthy Eating Strategy and will implement the mandatory FOP label policy in 2026. Two Ontario-based studies examined the impacts of health behaviors (smoking, alcohol consumption, poor diet and physical inactivity) attributed to hospital bed-days and costs. They found 36% of hospital use was attributable to all health behaviours resulting in 900,000 bed-days annually. Between 2004-2013, 22% of healthcare costs totalling \$89.4 billion were attributable to the four health behaviours. These are likely underestimates as diet was measured based on fruit/vegetables frequency.

The objective is to evaluate Health Canada's Proposed FOP policy on hospital bed-days.

Detailed dietary data from the nationally representative cross-sectional national survey data Canadian Community Health Survey-Nutrition 2004 linked to Discharge Abstract Database (2004-14) for hospital use will be used for analysis. Data-driven methodology will be employed and development of multivariable risk models using zero-inflated negative binomial regression with multiple exposure groups to test a dose-response.

Results are undergoing, will be ready September 2024.

This is the first study to analyze Health Canada's proposed FOP policy related to economic outcomes. These findings will provide evidence-based recommendations to policymakers on nutrition policy.

