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PP 101: Elimination of iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) in Sri Lanka: does our salt industry comply with SLS guidelines for salt iodisation?

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Introduction: IDD refers to all the consequences of iodine deficiency in a population. In 1993, WHO/UNICEF recommended universal salt iodization (USI) as the main strategy to achieve elimination of IDD. The USI programme was implemented in Sri Lanka in 1995. Assessment of the iodine content of commercially available salt products is important for proper programme monitoring. The iodine content of edible common salt must be within 15 – 30 mg/ kg (SLS 79).

Aims: To assess the quality of salt products that are currently available in Bope-Poddala health division in Galle.

Methods: Samples were randomly purchased from boutiques, supermarkets and fairs. Total of 86 salt samples from 42 brands (2 from different batches) were purchased during July 2011 to August 2011. Samples were analyzed in triplicate for iodine content using iodometric titration method. Details on each packet of salt were recorded.

Results: Only 64% of samples had iodine content in the legal range whereas, 23% had lower and 13% had higher values. Iodine content was indicated in 78% and ingredients indicated in 57% of salt packets. 9% of samples were sold in fairs under direct sun light and only 2% had the SLS certificate.

Conclusions: Findings highlighted that standardization of salt industry appears questionable in Sri Lanka and establishing a proper mechanism to improve the quality of salt products to achieve the goal of elimination of IDD is urgent.