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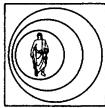
# Second European Nutrition Conference

## Short Communications

Editors

*N. Zöllner, G. Wolfram and Ch. Keller, Munich*

71 figures and 74 tables, 1977



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## Contents

### Dietary Recommendations

Chairman: *H. Jakobsen*, Copenhagen and *H.K. Henderickx*, Gent

<i>Harju, E.</i> : Food Energy and Nutrient Intake by Some Groups of Finnish Population . . . . .	13 (257)
<i>Stolley, H. and Schrage, C.</i> : Water Balance and Water Requirement of Preschool Children . . . . .	15 (259)
<i>Decker, K.; Dotis, B.; Glatzle, D., and Hinselmann, M.</i> : Riboflavin Status and Anaemia in Pregnant Women . . . . .	17 (261)
<i>Böni, H.; Wassmer, A.; Brubacher, G., and Ritzel, G.</i> : Assessment of the Vitamin B <sub>2</sub> Status by Means of the Glutathione Reductase Test . . . . .	20 (264)
<i>Krämer, U.; Bitsch, R., and Hötzl, D.</i> : Applicability of Blood and Urine Analysis for the Determination of Nutritional Status of Riboflavin . . . . .	22 (266)
<i>Pietrzik, K. and Hötzl, D.</i> : Studies for the Evaluation of Pantothenic Acid Requirement . . . . .	23 (267)
<i>Pollitt, N.T. and Salkeld, R.M.</i> : Vitamin B Status of Geriatric Patients . . . . .	24 (268)
<i>Bitsch, R.; Dersi, A., and Hötzl, D.</i> : Effect of Different Biotin Supply in Rats . . . . .	27 (271)
<i>Jägerstad, M.</i> : Folate Intake and Blood Folate in Elderly Subjects, a Study Using the Double Sampling Portion Technique . . . . .	29 (273)
<i>Kallner, A.; Hartmann, D., and Hornig, D.</i> : Determination of Bodypool Size and Turnover Rate of Ascorbic Acid in Man . . . . .	31 (275)
<i>Aldashev, A.</i> : A Change in Vitamin C Supply of the Growing Organism at Qualitatively Different Protein Contents of Diet . . . . .	36 (280)
<i>Jaus, H.; Sturm, G.; Grässle, B.; Romen, W., and Siebert, G.</i> : Metabolic Effects and Liver Damage after Prolonged Administration of High Doses of Nicotinamide to Rats . . . . .	38 (282)
<i>Abdulla, M.; Jägerstad, M.; Nordén, Å.; Qvist, I., and Svensson, S.</i> : Dietary Intake Electrolytes and Trace Elements in the Elderly . . . . .	41 (285)
<i>Habermann, J.; Horn, K., and Scriba, P.C.</i> : Alimentary Iodine Deficiency in the Federal Republic of Germany: Current Inefficiency of Goitre Prophylaxis .	45 (289)
<i>Parry, W.H.</i> : Distribution of Protein-Bound Zinc in Normal and Zinc-Deficient Lamb Plasma . . . . .	48 (292)
<i>Rudas, B.; Prokop, K., and Prosenbauer, G.</i> : A New Way to Improve Nutrition in Workers' Canteens . . . . .	49 (293)
<i>Hrubý, J.</i> : Translation of Dietary Allowances into Food . . . . .	51 (295)

## Obesity

Chairman: *A.S. Truswell, London*

<i>Poskitt, E.M.E.</i> : Overfeeding and Overweight in Infancy and Their Relation to Body Size in Early Childhood . . . . .	54 (298)
<i>Rabast, U.; Kasper, H., and Schönborn, J.</i> : Obesity and Low-Carbohydrate Diets – Comparative Studies . . . . .	56 (300)
<i>Howard, A.M. and McLean Baird, I.</i> : Very Low Calorie Semi-Synthetic Diets in the Treatment of Obesity. An Inpatient/Outpatient Study . . . . .	59 (303)
<i>Scalera, G.; Di Bella, L.; Tarozzi, G., and Rossi, M.T.</i> : Food and Fluid Intake and Body Weight Gain after Symmetrical Corticocerebellar Lesions . . . . .	61 (305)
<i>Grupp, U.; Siebert, G.; Gerlach, H., and Zehner, A.</i> : Nutritional and Biochemical Investigations on Disaccharide Alcohols . . . . .	63 (307)
<i>Sturm, G.; Rogdakis, E.; Strutz, C., and Siebert, G.</i> : Lipogenic Enzyme Activity in Relation to Fat Accumulation . . . . .	66 (310)
<i>Di Bella, L.; Tarozzi, G.; Rossi, M.T., and Scalera, G.</i> : Convergence of Afferences from Tongue and Mouth Structures, and Their Significance for Food Acceptance . . . . .	69 (313)
<i>Tarozzi, G.; Di Bella, L.; Scalera, G., and Rossi, M.T.</i> : Role of Proprioceptive Masticatory Afferences in the Rat Feeding Pattern Behaviour . . . . .	70 (314)

## Epidemiology

Chairman: *F. Fidanza, Perugia*

<i>Golubović Čurčić, V.</i> : Relation of Nutritional Status to the Systolic Blood Pressure in Teenagers of 15–19 Years . . . . .	73 (317)
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## Nutritional Significance of Genetic Disease

Chairman: *W. Auerswald, Vienna*

<i>Hambraeus, L.; Hardell, L.I., and Ellingsen, E.</i> : Effect of Dietary Protein and Physical Exercise on Patients with Arginino-Succinic Aciduria . . . . .	75 (319)
<i>Clegg, K.M.</i> : Nitrogen Balance Trials with Cystic Fibrosis Patients . . . . .	77 (321)
<i>Ladodo, K.S.</i> : Peculiarities of Dietetic Therapy in Infants' Hereditary Diseases . . . . .	79 (323)
<i>Schlotheim, M. v. and Canzler, H.</i> : Dietary Treatment of Familiar Hypercholesterolemia by Linoleic Acid-Rich Diet, MCT or Low Fat Diet . . . . .	81 (325)
<i>Judd, P.A.; Kay, R.M., and Truswell, A.S.</i> : The Cholesterol-Lowering Effect of Pectin . . . . .	85 (329)
<i>Oster, J.; Schellenberg, B.; Vogel, G.; Oster, P.; Raetzer, H., and Schlierf, G.</i> : Cardiovascular Risk Factors and Dietary Habits of 200 'Healthy' Subjects in Heidelberg . . . . .	86 (330)
<i>Veitl, V.; Irsigler, K., and Ogris, E.</i> : Body Composition, Glucose Tolerance, Serum Insulin, Serum Lipids and Eating Behavior in Top Austrian Sportsmen . . . . .	88 (332)
<i>Rauch-Janssen, A.; Gröbner, W., and Zöllner, N.</i> : Comparison of Serum Uric Acid and Urinary Uric Acid Excretion under a Soy Protein Diet Low in Purines and under a Formula Diet Virtually Free of Purines . . . . .	94 (338)

## Special Clinical Nutrition

Chairman: *A.S. Truswell*, London

<i>Andersson, H.; Isaksson, B., and Warnold, I.</i> : Intake and Expenditure of Energy and Nitrogen in Hospitalized Patients . . . . .	98 (342)
<i>Sailer, D. and Berg, G.</i> : Essential Fatty Acid Deficiency Syndrome in the Adult . . . . .	101 (345)
<i>Brooke, O.G. and Alvear, J.</i> : High Fat Feeding in Immature Infants . . . . .	104 (348)
<i>Lönnnerdal, B.; Forsum, E., and Hambræus, L.</i> : A Longitudinal Study of the Protein Content of Human Milk from Well-Nourished Swedish Mothers . . . . .	106 (350)

## Parenteral Nutrition

Chairman: *J. Hrubý*, Prague

<i>Machytka, B.; Hoos, I., and Förster, H.</i> : Fatty Liver in Rats following Parenteral Hyperalimentation with Glucose or Glucose Substitutes . . . . .	110 (354)
<i>Sprandl, U.; Heuckenkamp, P.-U., and Zöllner, N.</i> : Evaluation of Maltose as Intravenous Nutrient in Man . . . . .	112 (356)
<i>Finke, C. and Reinauer, H.</i> : Utilization of Maltose and Oligosaccharides after Intravenous Infusion in Man . . . . .	115 (359)
<i>Boecker, S.; Hoos, I., and Förster, H.</i> : Suitability of Maltose for Parenteral Nutrition . . . . .	118 (362)
<i>Heuckenkamp, P.-U.; Sprandl, U., and Liebhardt, E.W.</i> : Studies Concerning Ethanol as a Nutrient for Intravenous Alimentation in Man . . . . .	121 (365)
<i>Förster, H.; Boecker, S., Dudziak, R., and Steuer, A.</i> : Long-Term Parenteral Nutrition with Fructose in Intensive Care Patients . . . . .	124 (368)
<i>Wolfram, G.; Eckhart, J., and Zöllner, N.</i> : Linoleic Acid in Serum of Patients with an Acute Serious Illness . . . . .	127 (371)
<i>Shlygin, G.K. and Golinko, O.N.</i> : Action of Parenteral Infused Amino Acids on the Functions of the Gastrointestinal Tract . . . . .	129 (373)

## Alcohol Consumption and Diseases Associated with It

Chairman: *F. Fidanza*, Perugia

<i>Hasunen, K.; Pekkarinen, M., and Nuutinen, O.</i> : Alcohol Consumption and Dietary Intake of Finnish Men . . . . .	132 (376)
<i>Hell, D.; Six, P., and Salkeld, R.</i> : Vitamin B <sub>1</sub> , B <sub>2</sub> and B <sub>6</sub> Status in Chronic Alcoholics . . . . .	134 (378)
<i>Stähelin, H.B.; Sommer, P., Widmer, L.K.</i> : Alcohol Consumption and Serum Lipids in Normolipidemic and Hyperlipidemic Men . . . . .	135 (379)
<i>Grunst, J.; Dietze, G., and Wicklmayr, M.</i> : Effect of Ethanol on Uric Acid Production of Human Liver . . . . .	138 (382)
<i>Hartmann, H.; Hoos, I., and Förster, H.</i> : Influence of Sugar Substitutes and of Ethanol on Purine Metabolism . . . . .	141 (385)
<i>Teschke, R.; Hasumura, Y., Lieber, C.S.</i> : Hepatic Pathways of Ethanol and Acetaldehyde Metabolism and Their Role in the Pathogenesis of Alcohol-Induced Liver Injury . . . . .	144 (388)

<i>Blomstrand, R.; Löf, A., and Östling, H.: Studies on the Metabolic Effects of Long-Term Administration of Ethanol and 4-Methylpyrazole in the Rat. Vitamin A Depletion in the Liver . . . . .</i>	148 (392)
<i>Bitsch, I.; Mazhari, S.; Klapp-Kunsemüller, E.; Airoldi, R.; Badelt, A., and Ronzheim-Ertl, K.: Acute Effects of Ethanol on Hematologic Parameters and Acid-Base Metabolism of Rats . . . . .</i>	152 (396)
<i>Powers, H.J. and Thurnham, D.I.: Influence of Red Cell Age on the Measurement of Riboflavin Status . . . . .</i>	155 (399)
<i>Henze, K.; Bucci, A.; Signoretti, P.; Menotti, A., and Ricci, G.: Alcohol Intake and Coronary Risk Factors in a Population Group of Rome . . . . .</i>	157 (401)

### Proteins and Nutrition

Chairman: *F. Vivanco, Madrid*

<i>Abrahamsson, L.; Hamraeus, L., and Bengtsson, O.: Protein Quality of Home-Prepared and Industrially Produced Baby Foods . . . . .</i>	160 (404)
<i>Schmandke, H.; Proll, J.; Uhlig, J.; Friedrich, M.; Noack, R., and Muschiolik, G.: Variation of the Nutritive Value of Proteins by Processing Textured Proteins . . . . .</i>	162 (406)
<i>Zimmermann-Telschow, H. and Müller-Wecker, H.: Influence of Protein Intake during Constant Carbohydrate Deficiency on Parameter in Human Blood in Relation to N Catabolism . . . . .</i>	168 (412)
<i>Bjarnason-Baumann, B.; Pfaender, P., and Siebert, G.: Enhancement of the Biological Value of Whey Protein by Covalent Addition into Peptide Linkage of Limiting Essential Amino Acids . . . . .</i>	170 (414)
<i>Forsum, E. and Hamraeus, L.: Nitrogen Utilization of Proteins and Their Corresponding Amino Acid Mixtures Studied in Growing Rats . . . . .</i>	171 (415)
<i>Zahra, S.A.; Topps, J.H., and Miller, T.B.: Effects of Dietary Protein and Energy Restriction on Lactating Beef Cows . . . . .</i>	173 (417)
<i>Mösli, P.R. and Coward, W.A.: Lipid Transport and Fatty Liver in Protein-Deficient Rats . . . . .</i>	175 (419)

### Carbohydrates

Chairman: *J. Hrubý, Prague*

<i>Heller, G.; Förster, H., and Fortmeyer, H.P.: Influence of the Various Dietary Carbohydrates on the Concentration of Metabolites and the Activity of Enzymes in the Liver of Diabetic Rats . . . . .</i>	177 (421)
<i>Schnell, E. and Siebert, G.: Pathways of Sorbitol and Related Sugars for Lipid Biosynthesis in the Rat . . . . .</i>	180 (424)
<i>Barta-Bedö, M. and Gaál, Ö.: Sexual Differences in the Caffeine and Glucose Tolerance in Different Rat Strains . . . . .</i>	182 (426)

### Fat and Nutrition

Chairman: *E.M. Widdowson, Cambridge*

<i>Crawford, M.A.; Hassam, A.G., and Hall, B.M.: Metabolism of Essential Fatty Acids in the Human Fetus and Neonate . . . . .</i>	187 (431)
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<i>Crawford, M.A.; Rivers, J.P.W., and Hassam, A.G.: Comparative Studies on the Metabolic Equivalence of Linoleic and Arachidonic Acids . . . . .</i>	189 (433)
<i>Hassam, A.G.; Rivers, J.P.W., and Crawford, M.A.: Potency of <math>\gamma</math>-Linoleic Acid (18:3<math>\omega</math>6) in Curing Essential Fatty Acid Deficiency in the Rat . . . . .</i>	190 (434)
<i>McGregor, L. and Renaud, S.: Influence of Dietary Linoleic Acid Level on Coagulation, Aggregation and Fatty Acid Composition of Rats . . . . .</i>	192 (436)
<i>Bruckdorfer, K.R.; Worcester, N.A., and Yudkin, J.: Influence of Diet on Rat Platelet Aggregation . . . . .</i>	196 (440)
<i>Reichwald, I. and Mangold, H.K.: Assessment of the Specificity of Enzymatic Reactions Using Mixed Substrates: Incorporation of Alkylglycerols in the Ionic Alkoxylipids of the Rat's Intestinal Mucosa . . . . .</i>	198 (442)
<i>Weinreich, K.; Stelte, W., and Bitsch, I.: Effect of Lead Acetate on the Spontaneous Activity of Young Rats . . . . .</i>	201 (445)
<i>Vogt, H.; Nezel, K., and Matthes, S.: Effect of Various Lead and Cadmium Levels in Broiler and Laying Rations on the Performance of the Birds and on the Residues in Tissues and Eggs . . . . .</i>	203 (447)
<i>Klausa, A. and Rehner, G.: Investigations about the Influence of a Chronic Alimentary Lead Intake on the Enzyme Systems of Rat Kidney . . . . .</i>	205 (449)
<i>Groot, E.H.: Water Fluoridation – Dental Caries – Osteoporosis. Old and New Views on the Fluoridation of Drinking Water . . . . .</i>	208 (452)
<i>Leibetseder, J.; Kment, Á.; Skalicky, M.; Haider, I., and Helali, I.A.: Copper Metabolism in Pigs . . . . .</i>	211 (455)

### Comparative Aspects of Nutrition and Growth

Chairman: *G. Ritzel, Basel*

<i>Varela, G.; Mejias, M.V.; Higuera, M. de la, and Urbano, G.: Dietary Protein, Cortisol and Fetal Growth . . . . .</i>	215 (459)
<i>Ošancová, K.; Hejda, S., and Zamrazilová, E.: Diet and Weight Gain in Pregnancy in Relation to the Birth Weight and Height of the Infant . . . . .</i>	216 (460)
<i>Donnet, M.L. and Stanfield, J.P.: A Survey of Infant Nutrition, Growth and Development in Glasgow. Preliminary Report . . . . .</i>	220 (464)
<i>Szotowa, W.; Czocharńska, J., and Traczyńska, H.: Influence of Nutrition of Small-for-Date Infants on Their Neurological Status . . . . .</i>	222 (466)
<i>Spady, D.W.; Hill, A.A., and Waterlow, J.C.: Energy Cost of Catch-Up Growth in Malnourished Children . . . . .</i>	224 (468)
<i>Morava, E.; Gergely, A., and Tarjan, R.: Influence of Dietary Cadmium and Copper on the Rachitogenic Effect of Some Anticonvulsants in Rats . . . . .</i>	225 (469)
<i>Priputina, L.S.; Mostovay, L.A.; Rudenko, A.K.; Smolyar, V.I., and Slivinskay, I.A.: Nutrition and Physical Development of School Children in the Ukrainian SSR . . . . .</i>	228 (472)
<i>Cremer, H.-D.; Flórez, A.; Navarro, L. de; Vuori, L., and Wagner, M.: Influence of Food Supplementation and/or Psychological Stimulation on Mental Development . . . . .</i>	231 (475)
<i>Wittmann, J. and Weigl, E.: Studies on Activation of Aspartate Aminotransferase (ASAT) and Gluamate Dehydrogenase (GDH) in Chicken Liver at the Time of Hatching . . . . .</i>	234 (478)
<i>Frigg, M.: Comparative Study on the Effect of Biotin Contained in Various Cereals on Chicken Growth . . . . .</i>	236 (480)

## Metabolism

Chairman: *H.K. Henderickx*, Gent

<i>Kather, H.; Vogt, B., and Simon, B.</i> : Human Fat Cell Adenylate Cyclase; Factors Affecting Hormone Sensitivity . . . . .	238 (482)
<i>Weiser, H.; Hanck, A., and Hornig, D.</i> : Ascorbic Acid and Cholesterol Interaction in Guinea Pigs . . . . .	240 (484)
<i>Selmeci-Antal, M. and Blaskovits, A.</i> : The Effect of Sodium Dodecylbenzene Sulphonate (SDBS) and Various Diets on Rat Liver Glucose-6-Phosphatase (G6P-ase) and Glucose-6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase (G6PDH) Activities . . . . .	244 (488)
<i>Geffert, G. and Blaskovits, A.</i> : The Effect of Different Oil Contents of the Diet on the Mixed Function Oxidase in the Liver of Rats . . . . .	246 (490)
<i>Nesterin, M.F.</i> : Dependence of Hormonal Effects from Nutrients Supply . . . . .	249 (493)
<i>Scharrer, E.; Hüntemann, H., and Blatt, J.</i> : Action of Insulin on Monosaccharide and Amino Acid Uptake into Muscle in Lambs . . . . .	253 (497)

## Absorption

Chairman: *W. Auerswald*, Vienna

<i>Seifert, J.; Ring, J.; Steininger, J., and Brendel, W.</i> : Influence of the Immune Response on the Absorption of Protein from the Gut . . . . .	256 (500)
<i>Breyer, R. and Förster, H.</i> : Effect of Sodium on the Active Transport of Sugars in the Rat . . . . .	259 (503)
<i>Förster, H. and Hoos, I.</i> : Influence of Gums on Intestinal Absorption . . . . .	262 (506)
<i>Meinen, M.; Aepli, R., and Rehner, G.</i> : Studies on the Absorption of Thiamine, Riboflavin and Pyridoxine <i>in vitro</i> . . . . .	264 (508)
<i>Davis, M.G.; Murphy, P.R.; Crawshaw, S.J., and MacGladrie, K.</i> : Ascorbic Acid Absorption in Rat Intestine and Kidney . . . . .	266 (510)
<i>Evans, S.C.</i> : Ophthalmic Nutrition and Prevention of Eye Disorder and Blindness	268 (512)

## Main Papers

Nutrition and Metabolism, Vol. 21, No. 1-3, 1977

## Nutritional Significance of Genetic Disease

Chairman: *A. François*, Paris

<i>Mancini, M.; Postiglione, A., and di Marino, L.</i> : Feedback Regulation of Metabolism by Dietary Constituents: Lipids . . . . .	13 (1)
<i>Gröbner, W. and Zöllner, N.</i> : The Influence of Dietary Purines and Pyrimidines on Purine and Pyrimidine Biosynthesis in Man . . . . .	26 (14)
<i>Jonxis, J.H.P.</i> : The Nutritional Significance of Inborn Errors of Amino Acid Metabolism . . . . .	33 (21)
<i>Lombeck, I. and Bremer, H.J.</i> : Primary and Secondary Disturbances in Trace Element Metabolism Connected with Genetic Metabolic Disorders . . . . .	49 (37)
<i>Booth, C.C.</i> : Coeliac Disease . . . . .	65 (53)

## Comparative Aspects of Nutrition and Growth

Chairman: *K.E. Blaxter*, Aberdeen

<i>Widdowson, E.M.</i> : Undernutrition and Retarded Growth before and after Birth	76 (64)
<i>Van Es, A.J.H.</i> : The Energetics of Fat Deposition during Growth	88 (76)
<i>Thorbek, G.</i> : The Energetics of Protein Deposition during Growth	105 (93)
<i>Kirchgessner, M.; Roth, H.-P.; Spoerl, R.; Schnegg, A.; Kellner, R.J., and Weigand, E.</i> : A Comparative View on Trace Elements and Growth	119 (107)

## Alcohol Consumption and Diseases Associated with It

Chairman: *C. den Hartog*, Rijswijk

<i>Goldberg, L.</i> : Epidemiology of Alcoholism	114 (132)
<i>Von Wartburg, J.-P.</i> : Metabolic Consequences of Alcohol Consumption	153 (141)
<i>Feuerlein, W.</i> : Neuropsychiatric Disorders of Alcoholism	163 (151)
<i>Sarles, H.</i> : Alcohol and the Pancreas	175 (163)
<i>Thaler, H.</i> : Alcohol Consumption and Diseases of the Liver	186 (174)
<i>Pokrovsky, A.</i> : Some Biochemical Aspects of Chronic Alcohol Intoxication	194 (182)

## Round Table on Comparison of Dietary Recommendations in Different European Countries

Nutrition and Metabolism, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1977

## Introduction. General Aspects on Recommended Dietary Allowances

*(A. Wretlind)* . . . . . 210 (186)

Reviews of and Views on Recommended Dietary Intakes in Different European Countries	215 (191)
Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and USSR ( <i>S. Hejda</i> )	215 (191)
Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden ( <i>B. Isaksson</i> )	218 (194)
Federal Republic of Germany ( <i>W. Kübler</i> )	222 (198)
The United Kingdom and Eire ( <i>A.S. Truswell</i> )	224 (200)
France, Italy and Spain ( <i>F. Vivanco</i> )	228 (204)
General Discussion (Rapporteur: <i>A.S. Truswell</i> )	231 (207)
Conclusions ( <i>A. Wretlind, S. Hejda, B. Isaksson, W. Kübler, A.S. Truswell and F. Vivanco</i> ; Rapporteur: <i>A.S. Truswell</i> )	244 (220)
Tables of Recommended Dietary Intakes in Different European Countries	251 (227)
Introduction	251 (227)
Czechoslovakia	252 (228)
Denmark	254 (230)
Federal Republic of Germany	256 (232)
Finland	258 (234)
German Democratic Republic	260 (236)
Hungary	262 (238)
Italy	264 (240)

Contents	12
The Netherlands	266 (242)
Norway	268 (244)
Poland	270 (246)
Roumania	272 (248)
Spain	273 (249)
Sweden	274 (250)
The United Kingdom	276 (252)
USSR	278 (254)

Second European Nutrition Conference, Munich 1976  
Nutr. Metab. 21 (Suppl. 1): 45-47 (1977)

## Alimentary Iodine Deficiency in the Federal Republic of Germany: Current Inefficiency of Goitre Prophylaxis

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Recent epidemiologic surveys showed that goitre is endemic in the FRG with an average incidence of 15 % (5) and that the alimentary iodine intake of 50 µg iodine/day (3, 4) is less than 30 % the optimum recommended by the PAHO (2). A successful iodine prophylaxis is hitherto not possible in the FRG: the law on dietetic food restricts the iodine content of iodinized salt to a maximum of 5 mg/kg (ppm) and the salt is only to be used for 'medically established' iodine deficiency. Therefore, the Thyroid Section of the German Society for Endocrinology recently recommended a goitre prevention program by compulsory iodination of salt with 10 mg iodine/kg (6). The present paper reports an investigation, in which the iodine content and its stability of available salts was studied.

### *Material and Methods*

All salts were bought in groceries (23 table salts, 8 sea salts and 142 iodinized salts). In order to avoid mistakes depending on inhomogeneity of iodine within one packing, always 100 g of salt were dissolved in 1 liter of distilled water and this solution was diluted before the iodine determination to a concentration of approximately 4 µg iodine/100 ml. The iodine content was analyzed by an iodine determination on a modified PBI Autoanalyzer, as previously described (3). The iodine standards ranged from 0.5 to 7.0 µg/100 ml. The intra-assay and interassay coefficients of variation were 4 and 6 %, respectively. The recovery of 5 standards added to solutions of 7 different table salts was  $105 \pm 15\%$  (mean  $\pm$  SD). In 6 different commercial control sera  $103 \pm 16\%$  of the iodine content were found.

### *Results*

The mean of the coefficients of variation of the iodide content within all different charges of 4 iodinized salts of the FRG was 7 %. In figure 1, the iodine content is plotted against the duration of storage of the unopened packages. Salt A (packed up in cartons) was iodinized sufficiently, but one charge was

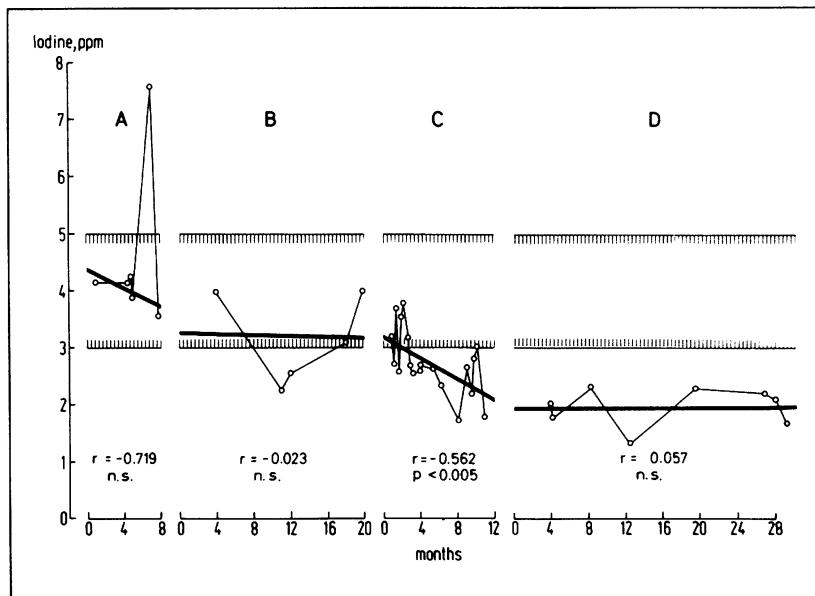


Fig. 1. Iodine content and time of storage of 4 different iodinized salts (A, B, C and D) of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Table I. Measured and intended iodine content of iodinized salts of different European countries

	Iodine content of iodinized salt, ppm	
	measured	intended
FRG	2.00 (n = 32) 2.75 (n = 28) 3.17 <sup>1</sup> (n = 13) 4.03 (n = 43)	3-5
Austria	5.49 (n = 11) 3.66 (n = 1)	10
Denmark	2.78 (n = 1)	
France	13.70 <sup>1</sup> (n = 1) 8.58 (n = 5) 6.39 (n = 1)	10-15
GDR	0.31 (n = 2)	
Great Britain	22.41 <sup>1</sup> (n = 2)	20-35
Switzerland	6.64 (n = 2)	10

<sup>1</sup> Salts packed up more tightly.

apparently iodinized twice. The loss of iodide during storage – also observed by other authors (1, 7) – was not statistically significant. Only 3 of 5 charges of salt B (packed up more tightly) were iodinized sufficiently. On average, there was no loss of iodide. Salt C (packed up in cartons) showed a fluctuating content of iodide between the different charges (CV = 20 %) and a progressive loss of iodide ( $p < 0.005$ ). All charges of salt D contained only half of the demanded iodide. The loss of iodide is more pronounced, if the packings are stored after opening. In salts packed up in cartons, we found a loss of iodide with a half-life of 7 months, whereas salt B packed up more tightly, was stably over a year.

We also measured table salts, sea salts and iodinized salts of different European countries. The iodine content of all table salts was below 0.2 ppm. The sea salt preparations varied from 0.2 to 1.0 ppm, which is insufficient for goitre prevention. Only 2 iodinized foreign salts packed up more tightly, were iodinized sufficiently; the iodine content of 5 foreign salts packed up in cartons was less than claimed (table I).

### Conclusion

The stability of iodide in the presently available salts is not yet satisfactory. The stability should be achieved by chemical stabilizers, or alternatively by iodination with iodate instead of iodide (1). It may also be improved by packing in tins.

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