Nutrition Literacy and Improvement of Food Environments (NULIFE)

Let's Fix Our Food

5th E- Dialogue Series

Date: 18 May 2026

Time: 02:00 pm-04:00 pm IST

Low-Sodium Salt Substitutes in India: Evidence, Health Impact, and Policy Implications

Welcome Address
(02.00 to 02.05 pm)

Dr. Bharati Kulkarni
Director, ICMR- National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad

Opening Remarks
(02.05 to 02.10 pm)

Dr. SubbaRao M Gavaravarapu
Scientist G & Head, NICHE Division, ICMR-NIN, India

Overview of LFOF-NULIFE
(02.10 to 02.15 pm)

Dr. Imran Syed
Resolve to Save Lives

Speakers (02.15 to 03.00 pm)

Potassium-Enriched Low-Sodium Salt Substitutes: Insights from Global Research

(15 mins)
(02.15-02.30 pm)

Prof. Bruce Neal
Executive Director
The George Institute for Global Health, Australia

Low-Sodium Salt Substitutes in India: Cardiovascular Benefits, Opportunities, and Informed Use across Populations

(15 mins)
(02.30-02.45 pm)

Prof. Vivekanand Jha
Executive Director
The George Institute for Global Health, India

Consumer Perspectives on Low-Sodium Salt Substitutes in India: Evidence from the PLURAL Study

(15 mins)
(02.45- 03.00 pm)

Prof. Sailesh Mohan
Deputy Director & Head, Centre for Chronic Disease Control, India

Panel Discussion (03.00 - 03.45 pm)

Scaling Up Low-Sodium Salt Substitutes in India: Translating Evidence into Action

Dr. Meenakshi Bajaj
Dietician, Tamil Nadu Government, Super Speciality Hospital, India

Dr. C.S. Surya Goud
Scientist C, ICMR-NIN, India

Dr. Murali Sharan
Scientist C, ICMR-NIE, India

Dr. Suparna Gosh-Jerath
Program Head, The George Institute for Global Health, India

Q & A session (03.45 – 04.00 pm)

5 Key take away points
Dr. SubbaRao M Gavaravarapu
ICMR – National Institute of Nutrition

Zoom Link

Youtube Link

ICMR- National Institute of Nutrition

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E- Dialogue No. 5

TOPIC

Low-Sodium Salt Substitutes in India: Evidence, Health Impact, and Policy Implications

BACKGROUND

Excess dietary sodium intake is a major risk factor for hypertension and cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), which are the leading causes of morbidity and mortality globally and in India. The World Health Organization recommends limiting sodium intake to less than 2000 mg per day; however, current estimates suggest that average sodium consumption in India significantly exceeds this recommended level (~4400 mg/d). High sodium intake is associated with elevated blood pressure, increasing the risk of heart disease, stroke, and kidney disorders. Reducing population-level sodium intake is therefore a key public health priority, and several strategies are being promoted to address this issue, including front-of-pack labelling, consumer awareness campaigns, and regulation of high-salt foods.

Alongside these approaches, low-sodium salt substitutes have emerged as a promising and cost-effective intervention. These substitutes typically replace a portion of sodium chloride with potassium chloride or other minerals, thereby lowering sodium intake and increasing potassium intake while maintaining palatability. In India, where a significant proportion of dietary salt/sodium is added during cooking or at the table, potassium-enriched low-sodium salt substitutes may offer an effective strategy to support the national goal of achieving a 30% population-level salt/sodium reduction. Evidence shows that the combined effect of lower sodium and higher potassium intake is effective in reducing blood pressure and lowering the risk of cardiovascular diseases, including stroke and heart attack. However, translating scientific evidence into policy and practice requires multi-sectoral engagement involving researchers, clinicians, public health experts, policymakers, and health programme implementers.

At the same time, successful implementation in a diverse country like India will require addressing several key challenges. These include limited India-specific evidence on the long-term effectiveness, safety, and acceptability of salt substitutes across different population groups and dietary patterns. There are also other considerations related to limited availability and affordability that may influence the scalability of potassium-enriched salt substitutes. In addition, misconceptions and myths about potassium-based salt substitutes among consumers and health professionals, including concerns about safety or taste, may influence their acceptance and uptake. Addressing these perceptions through clear communication and evidence-based guidance will be important. Finally, ensuring availability across markets and public distribution channels, affordability for lower-income populations, and acceptability in terms of taste preferences and cultural food practices will be critical for large-scale adoption.

ABOUT THE E-DIALOGUE

The 5th E-Dialogue under the LFOF-NULIFE initiative of ICMR–National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN) will bring together national and international experts to discuss the evidence, public health potential, and implementation considerations for low-sodium salt substitutes. The dialogue aims to foster knowledge exchange on the effectiveness, benefits, safety, and policy pathways for promoting low-sodium salt substitutes as part of India's efforts to reduce dietary sodium intake and prevent non-communicable diseases.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Highlight global and national evidence on the effectiveness of low-sodium salt substitutes in reducing blood pressure and the risk of CVDs
- Explore policy and programme pathways for promoting low-sodium salt substitutes as a part of India's sodium reduction strategies
- Identify opportunities for integrating salt substitution in public health programmes and food environments