GFDx: An Analysis and Visualization Tool for Data on Food Fortification

Biography

Ms. Becky Tsang is Project Manager for the Global Food Fortification Data Exchange (GFDx) Secretariat, USA. She has dual roles at the Food Fortification Initiative (FFI) as the Technical Officer in the Asia Pacific Region and global focal point for rice fortification and also consults with the Iodine Global Network (IGN) as the program manager of the Double Fortified Salt consultation. Ms. Tsang’s experience in fortification includes landscape analyses to identify opportunities for fortification and providing technical support to governments and partners in Asia planning, implementing, and evaluating cereal grain fortification.

Prior to her roles with the GFDx, FFI, and IGN, Ms. Tsang was a fellow at the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities. Her work focused on translating evidence into recommendations and policy to eliminate folic acid preventable birth defects. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications and a Master of Public Health with a focus in global public nutrition.

Abstract

The Global Fortification Data Exchange (GFDx) is an open-access database and website with information for up to 196 countries on the fortification of maize flour, oil, rice, salt and wheat flour. Data are provided by country partners or are extracted from publicly available documentation. Available in English (FortificationData.org) and Spanish (FortificacionDatos.org), the website presents programmatic information in maps, figures and tables, and it provides downloadable raw data for further analysis.

The GFDx makes fortification information readily available for decision-makers. For example, with the GFDx, decision-makers can:

1. use data on food intake/availability and the proportion of food that is industrially processed to identify which fortifiable foods will be consumed by the most people;
2. collect information on legislation, standards and monitoring protocols in a country for a particular food to determine if they have data to support fortification implementation and monitoring;
3. determine if fortification is likely to benefit the population by analyzing information on the proportion of food that is fortified according to country specifications (i.e. compliance), proportion of individuals consuming the fortified food (i.e. coverage), the amount of nutrient requirements potentially contributed by fortification, alignment of fortification specifications with international guidelines and/or presence of impact studies carried out in the country.

The presentation will highlight how GFDx data can and has been used for decision making at country, regional and global levels.