



INTRODUCTION

Food for infants and young children must satisfy their nutritional requirements in order to assure a normal growth development and a good health status.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends exclusive breastfeeding starting within one hour after birth until six months old.

Processed cereal-based foods, include different types of products, namely simple cereals which are or have to be reconstituted with milk or other appropriate nutritious liquids



AIM

To evaluate the nutritional quality of processed cereal-based foods for infants and young children (PCYC) available in the Portuguese market.

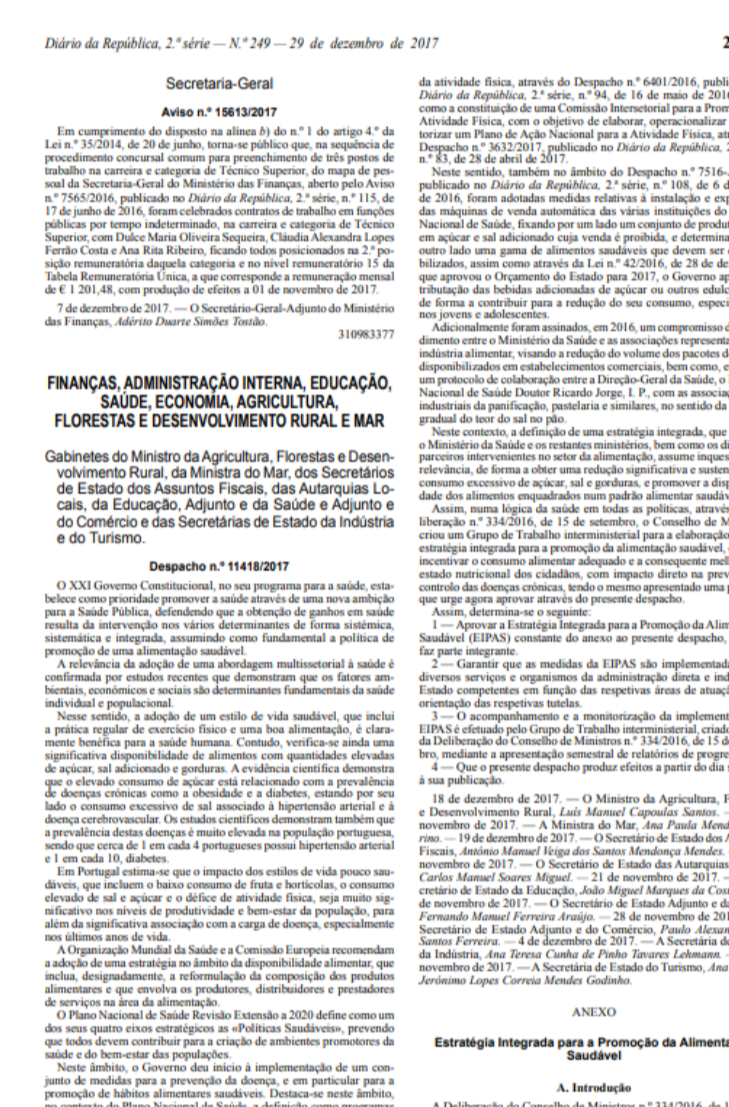


METHODOLOGY

During october 2023, nutritional information for PCYC was collected on the websites of major supermarket chains and pharmacies.

A database with detailed information for 50 PCYC was developed and analyzed by applying

Product identification	Food label	Nutrition declaration	Other information
<input type="checkbox"/> Type of product	<input type="checkbox"/> Ingredients list	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy value (kJ and kcal)	<input type="checkbox"/> Price (per Kg)
<input type="checkbox"/> Producer name	<input type="checkbox"/> Allergens	<input type="checkbox"/> Fat (g)	<input type="checkbox"/> Serving size
<input type="checkbox"/> Producer country	<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition claims	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturated fatty acids (g)	<input type="checkbox"/> Product images
<input type="checkbox"/> Brand	<input type="checkbox"/> Storage conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> Carbohydrates (g)	<input type="checkbox"/> Additional information (organic, vegetarian, gluten-free, lactose-free)
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial product name		<input type="checkbox"/> Sugars (g)	<input type="checkbox"/> Nutriscore
<input type="checkbox"/> Regulatory product name		<input type="checkbox"/> Fibre (g)	<input type="checkbox"/> Traffic light label
		<input type="checkbox"/> Protein (g)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> Salt (g)	



Portuguese Integrated Strategy for the Promotion of Healthy Eating (EIPAS)

ALIMENTOS por 100g			
	GORDURA (Lipídios)	GORDURA SATURADA	AÇÚCARES
ALTO	mais de 17,5g	mais de 5g	mais de 22,5g
MÉDIO	entre 3,7-5g	entre 1,5-5g	entre 5-22,5g
BAIXO	3g ou menos	1,5g ou menos	5g ou menos

Traffic-light system



Nutri-Score



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Salt was above 0.3 g/100 g in 40% of the products and sugars were higher than 5 g/100 g in 72% of the products, which are goals of EIPAS (Figure 1).

In the traffic light label analysis, 48% of the products are marked as red for sugars.

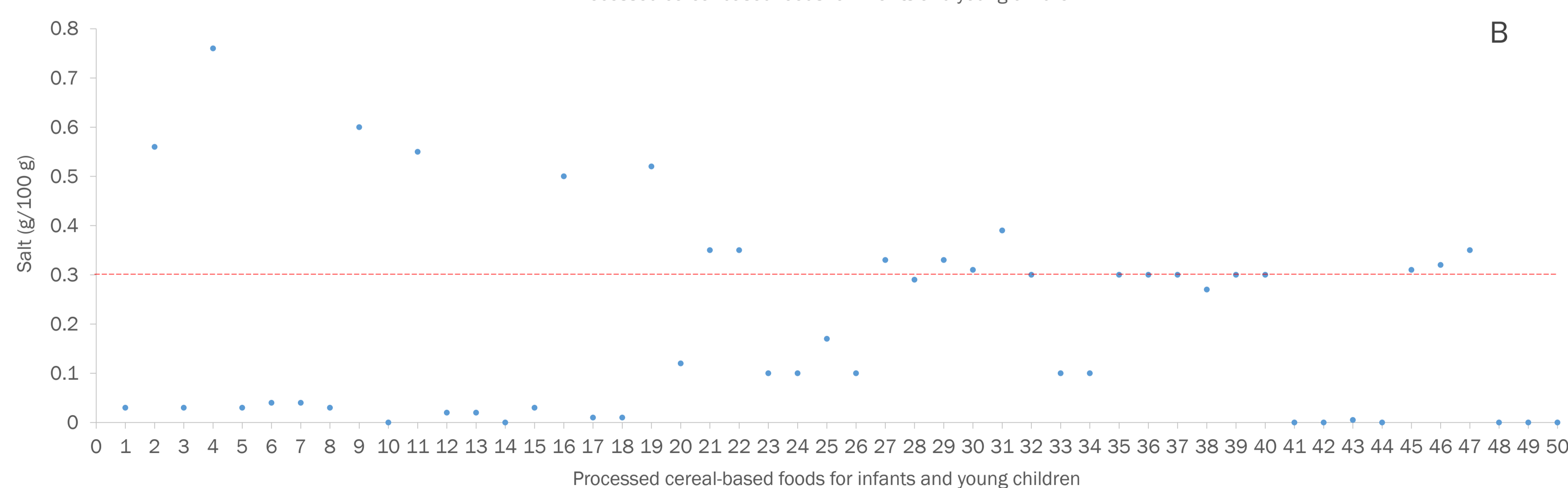
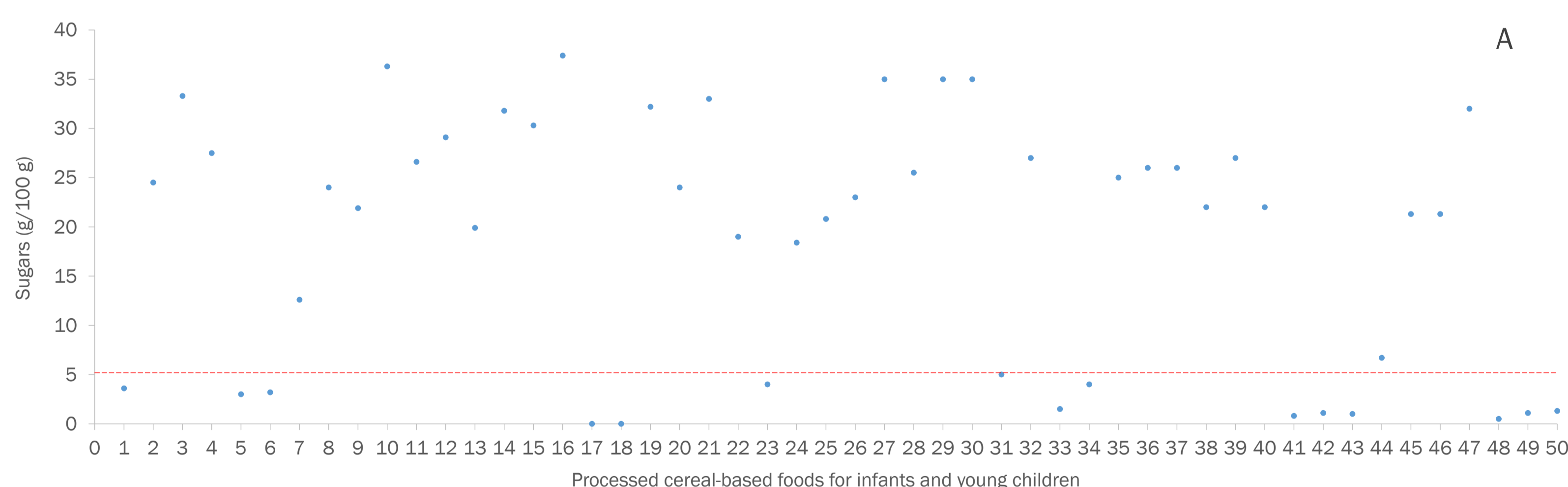
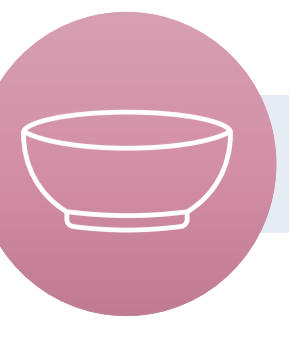
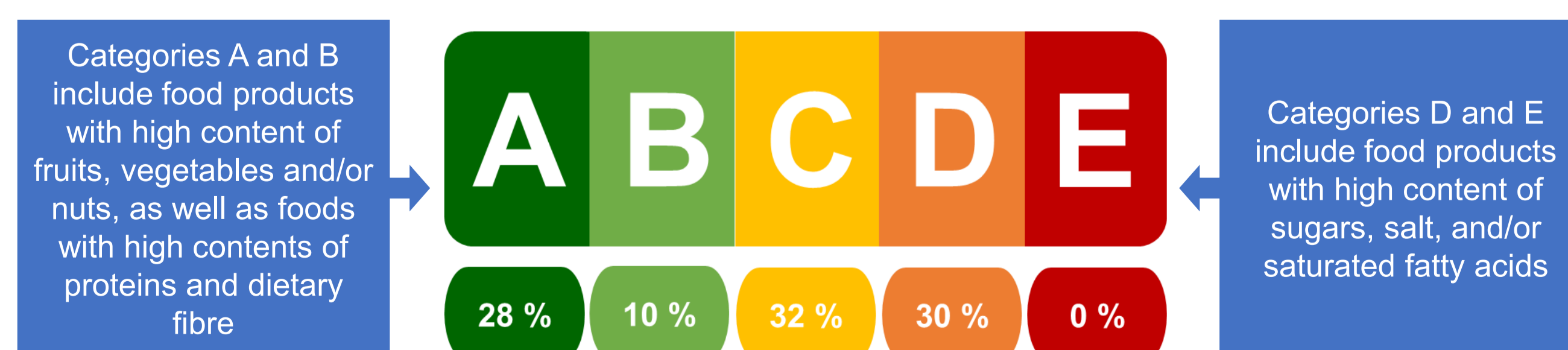


Figure 1. Sugars and salt content (g/100 g) of the studied processed cereal-based foods for infants and young children. (---) goals of EIPAS.

	FAT	SFA	SUGARS	SALT
HIGH	0 %	0 %	48 %	0 %
MEDIUM	66 %	52 %	22 %	20 %
LOW	34 %	48 %	30 %	80 %

According to Nutri-Score, 30% of the products are classified as "D", indicating poor nutritional quality.



CONCLUSION

In general, our results support that reformulation strategies for some of these products are still needed. It is crucial to assure proper nutrition during infancy to support the growth, health, and development of children. Moreover, it is of utmost importance to develop food education programs in schools and for parents, and by this way promote health literacy.