

# Analytical Methods for Assessing Nutritional Label Claims and Compliance in Food Packaging: A Comprehensive Review

Mansoor Ali<sup>1</sup>, Zeshan Ahmad<sup>2</sup>, Arslan Khan<sup>3</sup>

1. The Department of Food Science and Technology, University of Agriculture, Peshawar, Pakistan
2. Department Chemistry, UET Lahore, Pakistan
3. The Department of Food Science and Technology, University of Haripur, Haripur, Pakistan
4. E-mail any correspondence to: Mansoor Ali ([mansoorshahpharma007@gmail.com](mailto:mansoorshahpharma007@gmail.com))

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## Abstract

Accurate assessment of nutritional label claims and compliance in food packaging is crucial for consumer protection and ensuring transparent food labeling practices. This review provides a comprehensive overview of recent literature on analytical methods for assessing nutritional label claims and compliance in food packaging. The review highlights the importance of accurate and reliable analytical techniques in verifying the accuracy of nutritional label claims and ensuring compliance with regulatory standards. Various instrumental techniques, such as chromatography and spectrometry, have been widely employed for quantitative analysis of macronutrients, micronutrients, and bioactive compounds. Emerging trends in rapid and non-destructive techniques, such as near-infrared spectroscopy and nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, offer promising avenues for faster and more efficient assessment. Challenges including sample preparation, matrix effects, and method validation are also discussed. Standardization, regulatory enforcement, and collaboration among stakeholders are emphasized to promote transparency and accuracy in nutritional labeling practices.

**Keywords:** food packaging; nutritional label claims; analytical methods; transparency; accuracy; standardization

## Introduction

Nutrition plays a vital role in maintaining good health and preventing various diseases. Consumers are increasingly aware of the importance of making informed dietary choices, and nutritional labels on food packaging serve as a key source of information.<sup>1</sup> Accurate and reliable nutritional information allows individuals to understand the composition of food

products, including macronutrients, micronutrients, and bioactive compounds.

Food packaging plays a crucial role in preserving the quality and safety of food products. It protects against contamination, extends shelf life, and provides information about product ingredients, nutritional content, and storage instructions.<sup>3</sup> Proper packaging also ensures that the nutritional value of the food is maintained throughout its shelf life, preventing nutrient degradation and maintaining freshness. Additionally, packaging serves as a marketing tool, communicating brand identity and attracting consumers' attention.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, accurate nutritional labeling on food packaging is essential for consumer protection, transparency, and informed decision-making.

Analytical methods are indispensable tools for assessing the accuracy of nutritional label claims and ensuring compliance with regulatory standards. These methods involve the quantification and identification of various components present in food products, including macronutrients, micronutrients, and bioactive compounds.<sup>5</sup> By employing instrumental techniques such as chromatography, spectrometry, near-infrared spectroscopy, and nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, analysts can accurately determine the nutritional content of food products.<sup>6</sup> These analytical methods provide reliable data to verify the claims made on nutritional labels and detect any discrepancies or misleading information. They help ensure that food manufacturers adhere to regulatory guidelines and accurately disclose the nutritional composition of their products. By promoting transparency and accuracy in nutritional labeling practices, these methods contribute to consumer protection, enabling individuals to make informed choices about their dietary intake.

Furthermore, the development and advancement of rapid and non-destructive techniques offer promising avenues for more efficient assessment of nutritional

labels. These techniques minimize sample preparation requirements, reduce analysis time, and provide real-time results, contributing to improved productivity and quality control in the food industry.<sup>7</sup> Accurate assessment of nutritional label claims and compliance in food packaging is essential for consumer protection and to ensure transparent food labeling practices.<sup>8</sup> Consumers heavily rely on nutritional labels to make informed choices about the products they purchase, and therefore, it is crucial that these labels accurately represent the nutritional content of the food items. This review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of recent literature on analytical methods for assessing nutritional label claims and compliance in food packaging. The review highlighted the importance of accurate and reliable analytical techniques in verifying the accuracy of nutritional label claims and ensuring compliance with regulatory standards.

### **Significance**

This study holds significant importance for consumer protection, regulatory compliance, industry practices, and research in the field of food science and nutrition. It provides valuable insights into the reliability and accuracy of analytical methods used to assess nutritional label claims and compliance in food packaging, enabling informed consumer choices, guiding regulatory standards, promoting accurate labeling practices in the industry, and facilitating further research and method development.

### **Objectives**

The objective of this review is to summarize recent literature on analytical methods for assessing nutritional label claims and compliance in food packaging, emphasizing accuracy and regulatory adherence.

### **Methodology**

This review follows a systematic approach to identify and analyze relevant literature on analytical methods for assessing nutritional label claims and compliance in food packaging. The methodology consists of three key steps: literature search, article selection, and data extraction.

In the literature search phase, comprehensive searches were conducted using databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, and Elsevier. Keywords related to nutritional label claims, compliance, analytical methods, and food packaging were used to identify relevant articles published within a specified time frame. The search included articles written in English and were encompass a range of sources, including research papers, review articles, and conference proceedings.

During the article selection phase, a rigorous screening process was employed. Initially, titles and abstracts were reviewed to assess their relevance to the topic. Selected articles then undergo full-text evaluation based on predetermined inclusion criteria, which prioritize studies focused on analytical methods for assessing nutritional label claims and compliance in food packaging. The final selection included articles that provide insights into instrumental techniques, sample preparation, matrix effects, and method validation.

In the data extraction phase, relevant information from the selected articles were extracted. This included details on the objectives, methodologies, and key

findings of each study. Specific attention was given to the analytical techniques employed, sample preparation protocols, considerations related to matrix effects, and the methods used for validation. The extracted data were carefully analysed and synthesized to provide a comprehensive overview of the different analytical methods used for nutritional label assessment, along with their strengths, limitations, and advancements.

### **Ethical approval**

No data has been directly collected for human or animal so ethical approval is exempted for this study.

### **Results**

Various instrumental techniques have been widely employed for quantitative analysis of macronutrients, micronutrients, and bioactive compounds present in food products. Chromatography, such as high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) and gas chromatography (GC), is commonly used for the separation and quantification of individual components. These techniques enable the determination of macronutrients such as carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, as well as micronutrients like vitamins and minerals.

Spectrometry techniques, such as UV-Vis spectrophotometry and atomic absorption spectroscopy, are utilized for the analysis of specific compounds. They offer valuable insights into the presence and concentration of various bioactive compounds and trace elements, including antioxidants and heavy metals, respectively.

In recent years, rapid and non-destructive techniques have gained attention for nutritional label assessment. Near-infrared spectroscopy (NIRS) is one such technique that provides rapid and simultaneous analysis of multiple components in a sample. It offers the advantage of minimal sample preparation, making it a time-saving method for assessing nutritional label claims. Similarly, nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy (NMR) provides detailed information about the chemical composition of a sample, including the identification and quantification of various compounds. These emerging trends offer promising avenues for faster and more efficient assessment of nutritional labels.

Several challenges need to be addressed to ensure accurate assessment of nutritional label claims. Sample preparation is a critical step that must be standardized to obtain reliable results. The complex matrix of food products may introduce interferences, affecting the accuracy of the analysis. Researchers and analysts must consider these matrix effects and develop appropriate methods to mitigate their impact.

Method validation is another crucial aspect of analytical techniques used for nutritional label assessment. Validation ensures that the analytical method is reliable, accurate, and precise, providing confidence in the obtained results. The validation process involves assessing parameters such as linearity, accuracy, precision, selectivity, and robustness of the method.

Standardization plays a vital role in ensuring consistency and accuracy in nutritional label assessment. Standardized methods should be established and implemented across the industry to promote uniformity and comparability of results. Furthermore, regulatory enforcement is necessary to ensure compliance with labeling regulations and to prevent misleading claims.

Regulatory bodies should actively monitor and enforce compliance to protect consumers' interests and maintain transparency in the food industry.

Collaboration among stakeholders, including food manufacturers, regulatory agencies, researchers, and consumer advocacy groups, is crucial for effective nutritional label assessment. Such collaboration can lead to the development of comprehensive guidelines, harmonization of analytical methods, and sharing of best practices. This collective effort promotes transparency, accuracy, and consumer confidence in nutritional labeling practices.

### Conclusion

The precise evaluation of nutritional label claims and adherence to food packaging standards is paramount to safeguarding consumers and promoting transparent food labeling. This necessitates the application of sophisticated analytical techniques such as chromatography, spectrometry, NIRS, and NMR, which serve as indispensable tools for verifying the accuracy of nutritional information. Ensuring this accuracy is a collective effort involving the establishment of standards, rigorous regulatory enforcement, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders in the food industry.

### AI Disclosure

ChatGPT 3.5 was used to improve the manuscript writing.

### Conflict of interest

The authors state no conflict of interest.

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