PortFIR – An integrated data provider as support for the food policy-makers

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Introduction

SAÚDE

Portuguese Food Composition Table (TCA) is managed by the National Institute of Health Doutor Ricardo Jorge (INSA) and is publicly available on the Portuguese Food Information Resource (PortFIR) platform.

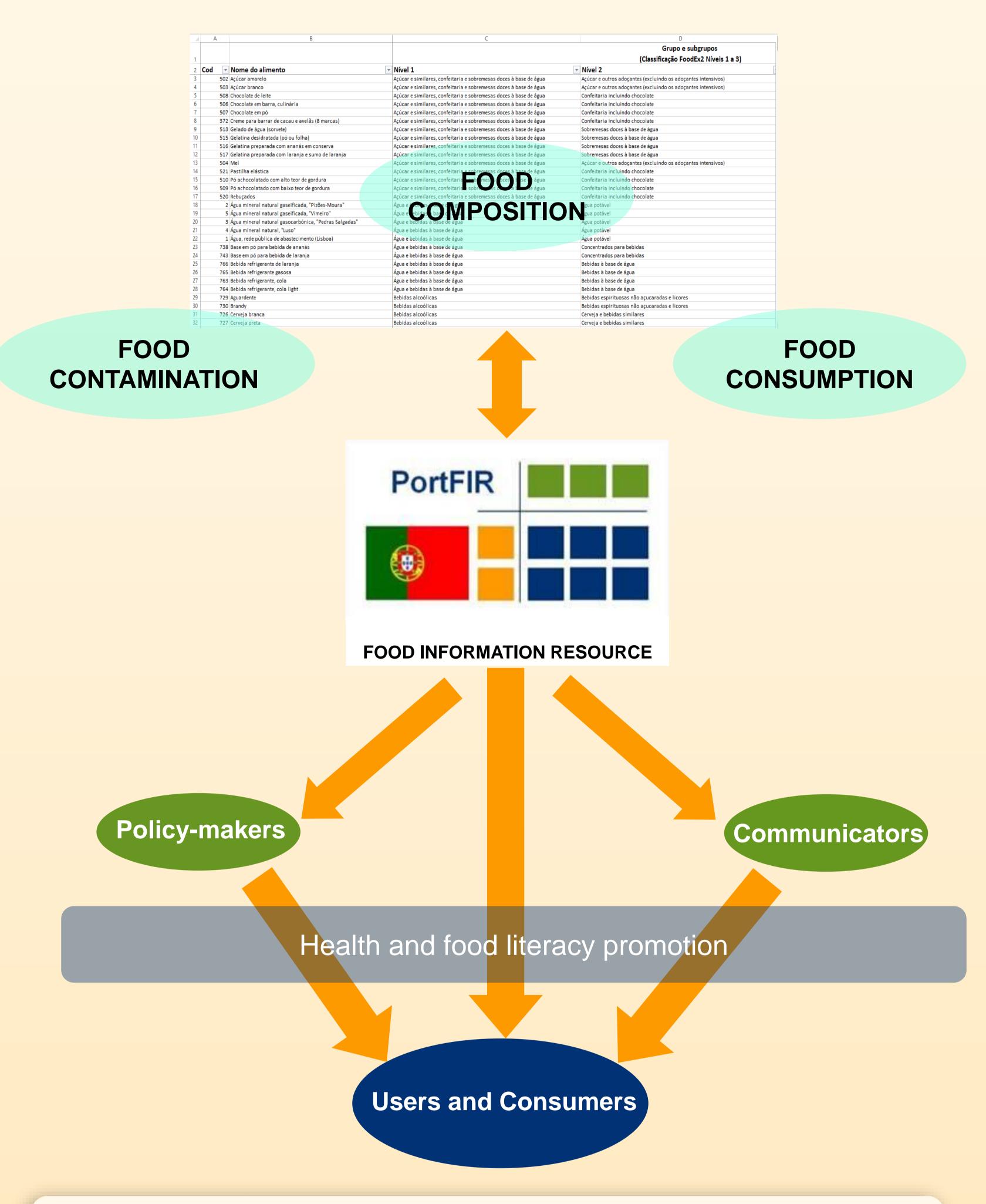
PortFIR, besides food composition data, was designed to include data on food contamination and food consumption, in order to provide national data easily available in one platform.

Objective

To compile and make widely available food-related data (food composition, food safety and food consumption), while providing science-based information, to support food policy-makers.

Material and Methods

- 1. PortFIR platform was updated to allow the download of an Excel file with the complete data already present in TCA. Thus, the book edition of TCA was discontinued, allowing a more frequent update and immediate availability of new versions as they are released.
- 2. PortFIR network, by including a wide range of expertise and PortFIR Working Groups (User Needs, Portions, Communication or Information Management), contributes continuously to improve the platform by suggesting priorities and the inclusion of new useful data.
- 3. Recent updates of TCA were made to include further information such as additional foods and recipes.



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Results and Discussion

PortFIR platform currently comprises detailed food composition data in a user-friendly way, such as a large array of foods and recipes, featuring 42 nutrients, related information both in Portuguese and English languages, enabling search by several options, TCA download (1145 foods), comparison of food nutrients and includes a calculation tool.

TCA download menu provides an Excel file containing all the food composition data currently present in the Portuguese database, in a workable format.

Conclusions

Updated food composition data is available at PortFIR through search or file download options. It is usable to assess the nutritional value of foods and as a scientific base for public health promoting programs. Further combination with food consumption data allows the assessment of population's nutrient intake, obtained by Portuguese food consumption surveys.

Expected future availability of food safety hazards occurrence and its combination with food consumption data, essential to exposure assessment, will provide a basis to design more comprehensive food related public health policies and improving the already existing ones, such as the Integrated Strategy for the Promotion of Healthy Eating¹.

A potential major role of PortFIR is to support policy makers and communicators by providing information to design health and food literacy promotion campaigns for the population. Also, the information is available for the consumer himself in a user-friendly way.