

THE GLUTAMATE
ASSOCIATION
UNITED STATES

For Immediate Release

Contacts: Lisa Watson (202-384-1840)
Martin Hahn (202-637-5926)

MSG Study Makes Unfounded Conclusion
Hypothesis runs counter to science and common sense

Washington, DC (August 22, 2008) -- A statement issued today by The Glutamate Association seriously challenges conclusions offered in a recent paper that suggested monosodium glutamate (MSG) may be positively associated with body weight. The paper, published in *Obesity* (He et al., 2008, 16:1875), estimated MSG intake of individuals in rural China by observing how much of the flavor enhancer they sprinkled on food during cooking.

"This study has no practical significance. First of all, we know based on World Health Organization data that countries with high MSG intakes do not have high population Body Mass Indices (BMI)," stated Brendan Naulty, president, The Glutamate Association. "Second, human studies where MSG was added to the diet have failed to show changes in body weight. And third, a recently published rat study suggests that MSG in the diet actually suppresses body weight."

The He et al. study did not take into account sources of dietary glutamate other than soy sauce. The average person in the United States consumes approximately 11 grams of glutamate, a common amino acid, each day from all food sources, primarily dietary protein. Dietary intake from MSG, the sodium salt of the amino acid glutamate and widely used as a flavor enhancer, averages less than one half gram/person/day, or about 1/10th teaspoon.

In the He et al. study, the average BMI among non-MSG users versus the highest quartile of estimated MSG use was 22.3 versus 23.5. Given this small difference, the imprecise methods by which MSG intake was estimated, and controlled human studies that directly conflict with the results of this report, The Glutamate Association statement strongly questions the broad extrapolation made by the authors.

Numerous regulatory authorities and expert bodies, including FAO/WHO, FDA, Health Canada, EFSA and FSANZ, all have concluded that MSG is safe for use as an ingredient in foods.

"There are many factors that we know play a significant role in BMI over time," Naulty concluded. "MSG intake is not one of them."

A copy of the [complete statement](#) is available on The Glutamate Association Web site, www.msgfacts.com.

- # # # -

The Glutamate Association seeks to provide an effective channel of communication among its members, the public, the media, the scientific community, food professionals, and government officials about the use and safety of glutamate. The Association also seeks to assure that relevant research and information on the safety and efficacy of MSG are made available to all interested parties.