

Key strategies for public health researchers

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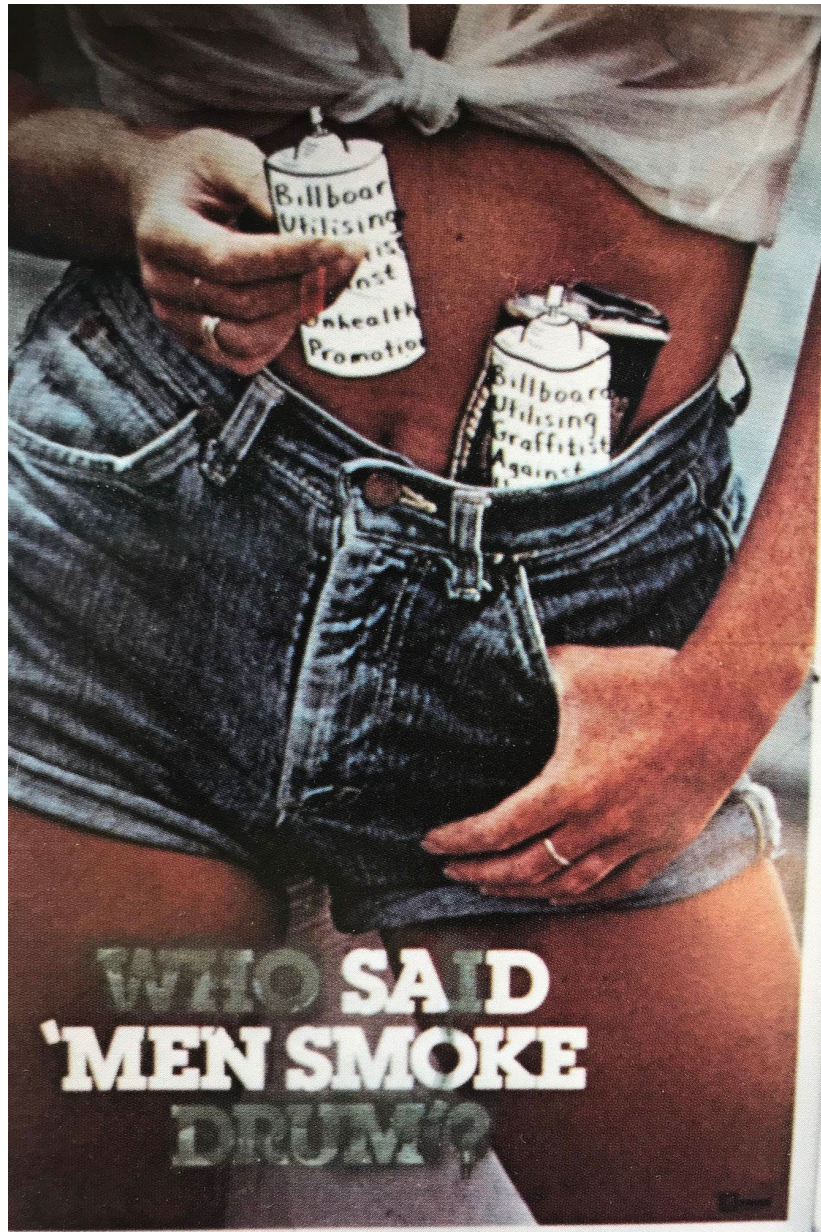
3 December, 2018



WHO Collaborating Centre
for Obesity Prevention



BUGA UP and Rothmans



What is the OPC?



INFLUENCE CHANGE



Our policy work

The Obesity Policy Coalition advocates to influence change through policy and regulation to improve diets and help prevent obesity, particularly in children.



Our campaigns

Overbranded, Underprotected

A comprehensive analysis on how the food industry is failing to protect children from unhealthy food marketing with its self-regulated codes, and what needs to be done to improve the system.



Media

Friday 26 October 2018

[Jane Martin, Executive Manager of the Obesity Policy Coalition responds to new report on Australians' diets across different stages of life](#)

Wednesday 24 October 2018

[We have the tools to fight obesity, so let's use them \(Herald Sun\)](#)

What's the latest on Twitter

 Obesity Coalition Retweeted



Jane Martin

@janemartinopc

Poor diet the leading global risk factor responsible for one-fifth of deaths in 2017. [#BurdenofDisease](#)
[theguardian.com/society/2018/n...](#)



Poor diet a factor in one-fifth o...
Global survey says diseases suc...
[theguardian.com](#)



Nov 11, 2018

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Strategies

Partnerships

Research and evidence

Media and communications

Role of Partnerships

Power of Partnerships

- Win Win

- Breaks down silos
- Presents a united front to politicians, bureaucrats, media
- Simplifies the 'ask'
- Spreads the risk
- Ensures groups are not captured by opposition
- Attractive to media
- Builds support with within partners

rethink sugary drink

They're cold, cheap and tempting but what frozen drinks don't advertise is the obscene amount of sugar in them

DON'T BE SUCKED IN

Frozen sugary drinks are full of sugar that can lead to toxic fat around your vital organs.



rethink sugary drink



Available in fast food outlets, petrol stations, sports centres and delis, you could be forgiven for thinking that at \$1 a frozen treat is an affordable, fun, harmless way to treat yourself in the warmer weather.

Frozen drinks can easily contain half a week's worth of sugar. Sugar that can cause toxic fat around your vital organs and lead to cancer, type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Rethink Sugary Drink has partnered with LiveLighter to encourage Aussies to think twice about how much sugar they're



How much sugar is in ...?

Facts

Tips and resources

For professionals



TIPPING THE SCALES

**8 critical actions
Australia must
take to tackle
obesity**

opc.org.au/tippingthescales
#TippingTheScales



**Toughen
restrictions on
TV junk food
advertising
to kids**



**Set food
reformulation
targets**



**Make Health
Star Ratings
mandatory**



**Develop an
active transport
strategy**



**Fund public
health education
campaigns**



**Add a 20%
health levy to
sugary drinks**



**Establish a
national obesity
taskforce**



**Monitor diet,
physical activity,
weight guidelines**

Endorsed by

Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance



Health Minister's advice

“On obesity in particular, the mixed approaches from advocates and researchers about what is needed to be successful have made it more difficult for governments to act decisively. When multifactorial approaches are likely to be needed, this can make the ‘ask’ confusing – governments often want a clear plan, or a clear starting point. In some public health areas, it is often hotly contested where one should start.”

Nicola Roxon, ex-Health Minister, Rudd Govt

Roxon N. Interview with the Hon. Nicola Roxon: getting evidence into health policy. Public Health Res Pract. 2017;27(1):e2711701

Partnering to oppose a Sugary Drink Tax

INDUSTRY SEEKS CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE TO OBESITY



The Australian retail, farming, grocery and beverage sectors contribute more than \$311bn to the economy each year, and account for approximately 15% of the total workforce in Australia.

Our industries understand that obesity is a public health problem in Australia, and that it is appropriate for calls to be made for Australians to modify and improve their dietary intake.

However, it is not beneficial to blame or tax a single component of the diet.

Obesity is a serious and complex public issue with no single cause or quick-fix solution. A new tax is not the way to make our nation healthier.

The McKinsey Global Institute, for instance, classifies taxation as one of the least effective obesity interventions, with 'No direct evidence for change in weight or change in consumption or physical activity levels.'^[1]

- In fact, consumption trends show that the change such a tax seeks to effect is already happening.
- Recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data indicates a decline in added sugar intake over time, yet obesity rates continue to climb.^[2]

As a food supply sector, we recognise that we have a role to play in improving the food choices available for the Australian consumer.

We will continue to:

- Promote and support healthy balanced lifestyles that involve responsible eating habits and

Role of Evidence

Research

- Utilising and synthesising existing research
- Filling in the gaps, particularly in relation to policy orientated research
- Orientation should be focussed on the question “What would it take?” from decision maker’s perspective

NATIONAL PREVENTIVE HEALTH
RESEARCH STRATEGY 2013-2018

A PRIORITY-DRIVEN
RESEARCH AGENDA FOR

OBESITY PREVENTION

April 2014

promoting
a healthy
australia



Australian Government
Australian National Preventive Health Agency



Government of Western Australia
Department of Health

https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/~media/Files/Corporate/general%20documents/Obesity%20prevention/Obesity_prevention_priority_research_agenda_2014.pdf



POLICY BRIEF

THE CASE FOR A HEALTH LEVY ON SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES

SUMMARY

A health levy on sugar-sweetened beverages¹ (SSBs) to increase their retail price and reduce consumption has been advanced as a potentially powerful policy intervention to improve diets and reduce the burden of chronic disease in Australia. Revenue raised by such a levy could be used to support healthy eating initiatives and subsidies on healthy foods, particularly for low socioeconomic position (SEP) households.

A health levy on SSBs is proposed here as a viable and recommended policy initiative, forming part of a comprehensive suite of measures to address diet-related disease. This is because there is evidence that a levy on SSBs has the potential to:

1. Effectively discourage consumption of a product that contributes substantially to the poor diets and chronic disease risk of Australians;¹
2. Decrease sales of unhealthy beverages and influence demand for healthier alternatives, such as water and low fat milk;
3. Encourage beverage manufacturers to reformulate their beverages to reduce sugar content;
4. Convey the message that the government recognises that these products are a matter of concern for public health; and
5. Raise considerable revenue which may contribute to health promotion initiatives.

is argued that consideration of a health levy on SSBs should be a priority for the Australian Government as an effective intervention to reduce obesity and chronic disease.

BACKGROUND

Australians consume large volumes of SSBs, and suffer high rates of overweight, obesity and chronic disease. The Australian Government has acknowledged the need to improve the diets and health of Australians; however few economic policies have been implemented in pursuit of that objective.

The need to consider economic and pricing strategies to reduce consumption of unhealthy products was underscored in 2013 by Australia's endorsement of the World Health Organization (WHO) *Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases 2013–2020* (GAP). The GAP recommends that member states consider economic tools justified by evidence, including taxes and subsidies, to promote the consumption of healthier food products and discourage the consumption of less healthy options.²³

The introduction of a healthy levy on SSBs is vigorously opposed by the beverage industry, which argues that a levy on SSBs will not improve health, will unfairly single-out the SSBs sector, will cost jobs, will disadvantage Australians on lower incomes and will curtail personal freedoms.⁴ However there is strong evidence of the potential efficacy of an SSB health levy, particularly for lower income groups, and growing international policy impetus to include this policy as

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Impact of a Tax on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages on Health and Health Care Costs: A Modelling Study

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OPEN ACCESS

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Data Availability Statement: The appendix details the data sources, which are all from published research papers or publicly available sources. The model is available in the Supporting Information files.

Funding: This work was supported by the Obesity Policy Coalition and by NHMRC funding for the Centre for Research Excellence in Obesity Policy and Food Systems (APP1041020). GS is the recipient of an Australian Research Council Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (project number DE160100307). Two of the authors (JM, NA) are employed by the Obesity Policy Coalition. The

Abstract

This paper aims to estimate the consequences of an additional 20% tax on sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) on health and health care expenditure. Participants were a adult (aged >= 20) Australians alive in 2010, who were modelled over their remaining lifetime. We used life-table-based epidemiological modelling to examine the potential impact of a 20% value-added tax on SSBs on total lifetime disability-adjusted life years (DALYs), incidence, prevalence, and mortality of obesity-related disease, and health care expenditure. Over the lifetime of adult Australian alive in 2010, seemingly modest estimated changes in average body mass as a result of the SSB tax translated to gains of 112,000 health-adjusted life years for men (95% uncertainty interval [UI]: 73,000–155,000) and 56,000 (95% UI: 36,000–76,000) for women, and a reduction in overall health care expenditure of AUD609 million (95% UI: 368 million–870 million). The tax is estimated to reduce the number of new type 2 diabetes cases by approximately 800 per year. Twenty-five years after the introduction of the tax, there would be 4,400 fewer prevalent cases of heart disease and 1,100 fewer persons living with the consequences of stroke, and an estimated 1606 extra people would be alive as a result of the tax. The tax would generate an estimated AUD400 million in revenue each year. Governments should consider increasing the tax on sugared drinks. This would improve population health, reduce health care costs, as well as bring in direct revenue.

Introduction

Unhealthy diets (11%) and high body mass index (9%) are the risk factors that contribute most to the burden of disease in Australia [1]. In order to reduce diet-related diseases, overweight, and obesity, focus should be placed on creating healthy food environments, whereby foods and beverages that contribute to a healthy diet are more readily available, affordable, and physically accessible, compared to unhealthy foods [2]. Food taxes have been frequently identified as a powerful tool to improve population diets [3], with evidence indicating that taxes are an effective intervention to improve the healthiness of consumption patterns [4]. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that country-level programs to combat obesity should



Australian sugary drinks tax could prevent thousands of heart attacks and strokes and save 1,600 lives

April 14, 2016 6:18am AEST

Sugary drinks are high in energy and lead to weight gain and obesity. Justin C/Flickr, CC BY-NC-ND

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343

20

106

Last month the [United Kingdom](#) announced a sugar tax on soft drinks. The tax will come into effect in 2018, with the funds to be used to address childhood obesity.

The move has been [applauded](#) by public health groups internationally. Unsurprisingly, the tax is [strongly opposed](#) by powerful groups in the food industry, and the announcement resulted in [shares in Coca-Cola temporarily plunging](#).

In our new research [published today in PLOS ONE](#), for the first time we have modelled the impact of such a tax in Australia. Over 25 years, a 20% rise in the price of soft drinks and flavoured mineral waters would save 1,600 lives. It would also prevent 4,400 heart attacks and 1,100 strokes.

Overall, the savings to the health-care system would add up to A\$609 million.

Authors



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Disclosure statement

Gary Sacks receives funding from the Australian

A 20% sugary drinks tax
in Australia  could save

1,600+ lives



The impact of a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages on health and health care costs: a modelling study. Published in PLOS ONE on 14 April 2016.





Policies for
tackling obesity
and creating
healthier food
environments

**Scorecard and priority
recommendations** for
Australian governments

February 2017

Further details available at
www.foodpolicyindex.org.au

obesity
policy
coalition

Benchmarking Australian governments' progress on global best practice food policy actions to address obesity and associated chronic disease.

Obesity Evidence Hub

Obesity
Evidence
Hub



Find key evidence on obesity trends,
impacts & prevention in Australia



Trends

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Impacts

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Treatment

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[LEARN MORE](#)



Environmental

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[LEARN MORE](#)

Role of Media and Communications





SUGAR HIT

Some of Australia's highest profile health groups have joined forces to push a tax on soft drinks and a ban on junk food advertising. "This is really urgent," said Obesity Policy Coalition executive manager Jane Martin. "We have a generation of children that could die younger than their parents."

Aisha Dow reports, Page 2

Photo: Shutterstock

Obesity Government support unlikely

Health groups call for 20pc levy on soft drinks

EXCLUSIVE

Aisha Dow
Health Reporter

A 20 per cent tax on sugary drinks is being proposed by Australia's leading health organisations as part of a tough new strategy to tackle obesity, which they say poses a greater risk to the nation than smoking.

A coalition of 34 high-profile groups including the Obesity Policy Coalition, Cancer Council, Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne and the Stroke Foundation

are calling on the federal government to establish obesity prevention as a national priority.

The strategy includes a ban on unhealthy food advertising on free-to-air television during prime time, between 5.30pm and 9.30pm, when they say the greatest numbers of children are watching.

"This is really urgent," said Obesity Policy Coalition executive manager Jane Martin.

"We have a generation of children that could die younger than their parents."

Rates of obesity continue to climb in Australia, with about 63 per cent of adults and 27 per cent of children obese or overweight.

The action plan, titled "Tipping the Scales" and launched on Tuesday, renews calls for a tax on sugary drinks, with a suggested levy of

Barnaby Joyce tells voters to 'stop eating so much' in attack on sugar tax

Deputy prime minister rejects Grattan Institute's suggestion and says tax office 'is not going to save your health'



 Barnaby Joyce on a sugar tax: 'If you want to lose weight, eat less'

Australia has an obesity problem because “people are sitting on their backside too much and eating too much food”, the deputy prime minister, [Barnaby Joyce](#), has said.

Joyce offered up some weight loss advice in response to [a report from the Grattan Institute](#) launched on Wednesday that calls for the federal government to introduce an excise tax of 40c per 100 grams of sugar in beverages to combat growing obesity-related healthcare costs.

The price of a two-litre bottle of soft drink would rise by about 80c under the tax, Grattan estimates, and it would raise about \$500m a year.

Asked about the proposal, Joyce responded that people should take personal responsibility for their health rather than rely on government interventions.

“The Australian Taxation Office is not going to save your health,” he told reporters in Canberra, “Do not go to the ATO as opposed to going to your doctor or putting on a pair of sand shoes and walking around the block.

“The ATO is not a better solution than jumping in the pool and going for a swim. The ATO is not a better solution than reducing your portion size. So get yourself a robust chair and a heavy table and, halfway through the meal, put both hands on the table and just push back. That will help you lose weight.”

Challenges

- Wicked public health problems
 - Time frame
 - Partnerships
 - Persistence
 - Incremental
- Evidence vs Innovation
- Everyone has an opinion, everyone eats.

Challenges


- Confidence to counter Big Food, Big Booze, Big Sugar, Big Alcohol, Big Tobacco,
- Personal attacks and fighting back
- Passion and purpose
- Developing new public health leaders
- Mentors/mentees
- Walking the walk



Arrogant lobby groups are hard to stomach

Patrick Carlyon, Herald Sun

November 23, 2018 5:10pm

 Subscriber only



The likes of the Obesity Policy Coalition tell us — and in this case, the AFL — what's best. And that's shielding us from the dangers of temptation. For we are but lemmings perched on the edge of so many cliffs. Smoking. Alcohol. Poker machines.

Such bodies push policy agendas far beyond their remit. They demand new controls, often by throwing up simplistic links of cause and effect as proof. They want sugar taxes, for example, even though sugar taxes have not worked around the world. They nod to London's mayor, Sadiq Khan, who has banned fast-food advertising from the city's transport network.

These unelected lobby groups seek to impose limits on our lives because they say they know better than we do. Our bodies are their business. And it doesn't seem to matter that our choices stand to be surrendered to their sanctimony.

They tell us what is right and wrong, appropriate or otherwise. And they apply it with a saccharine-coated righteousness far more nauseating than any junk food pig-out.

Isn't it time we banned those who demand the silly bans? Their encroachment on public life is far more sickening than the idea of a kid wanting a junior burger.



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