



DON'T

We  need



a sugar tax



NOW!



Alison Barnes RD

Research Associate, Newcastle University

NHS Diabetes/Weight Management Dietitian

What we are not debating



We eat and drink
too much sugar...



What we are not debating

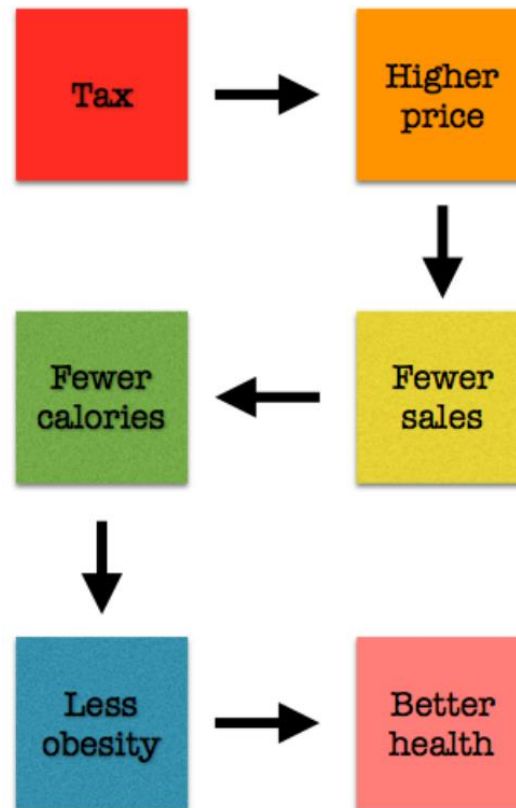


...it's bad for our health...

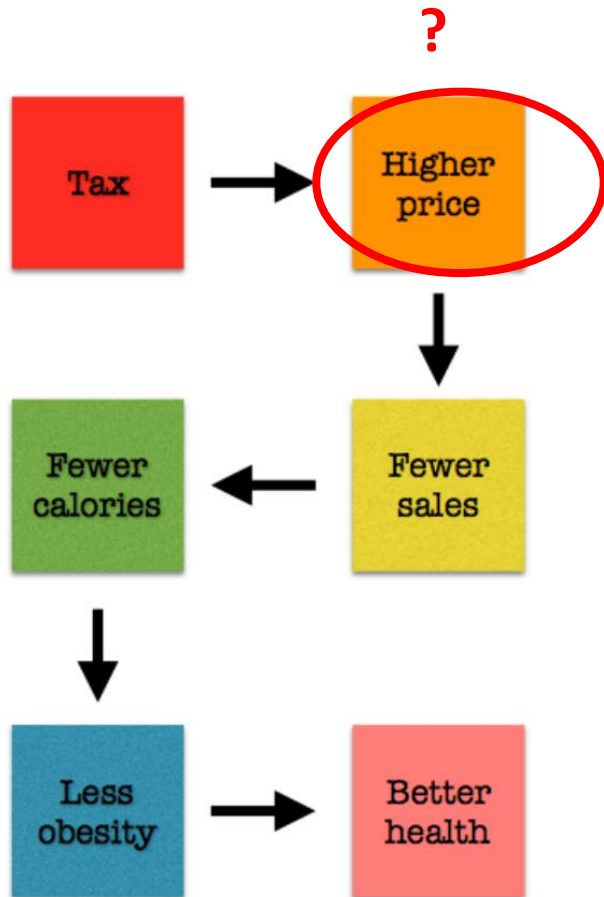


...effective strategies to reduce consumption are needed

How a sugar tax is supposed to work:

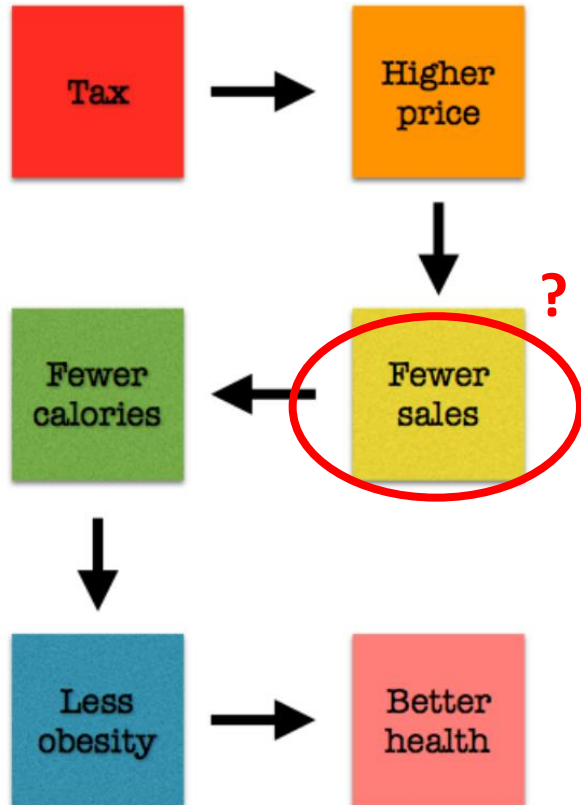


Effect on Prices: evidence to date

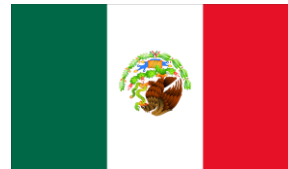


- 100% of tax passed on to consumers
- Prices often increase *more* than the tax
- Increased price can be offset or avoided by
 - Switching to cheaper brands
 - In-store promotions
 - Crossing borders
 - Aggressive marketing

Effect on sales/purchases



- Demand for high sugar foods/drinks is *inelastic*



Mexico 10% SSB* tax¹
First year: 6% fall in sales



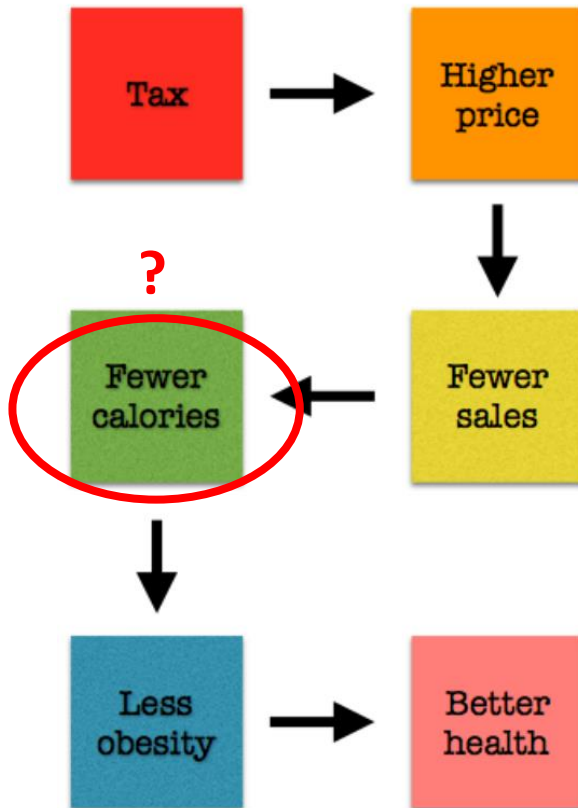
UK 20% SSB tax²
Projected 16% fall in sales

- Causality unproven
- Only short term effects observed

*sugar sweetened beverage

1. Colchero et al, BMJ 2016;352:h6704
2. Briggs et al BMJ 2013; 347:f6189 doi

Effect on calorie intake



- - 9kcal/d

Mexico 10%
SSB tax: first year

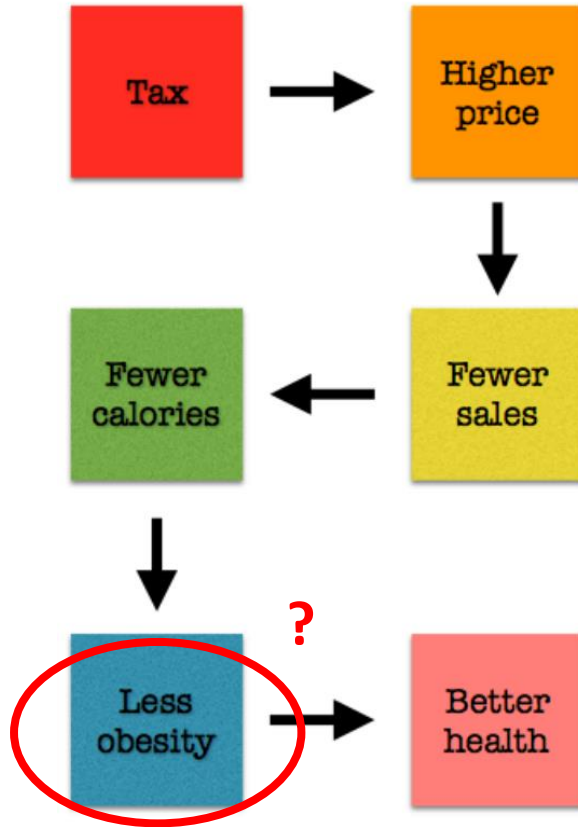


- 16-29y: - 13kcal/d
- Overall: - 4 kcal/d

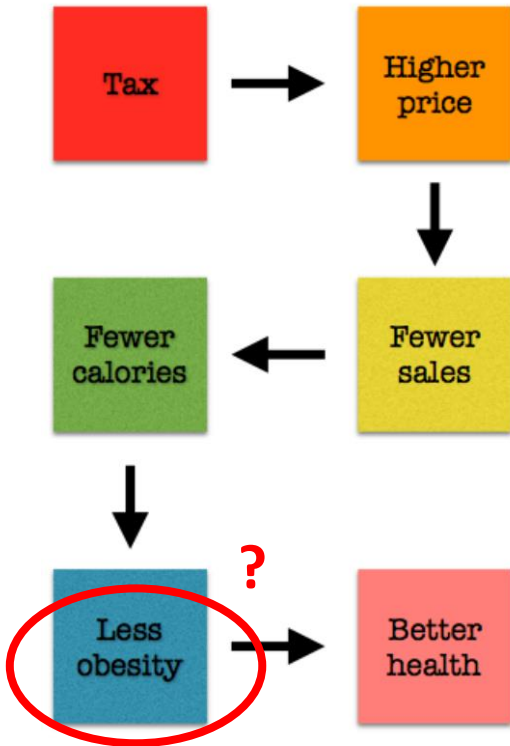
UK 20% SSB tax:
projected

Effect on weight

How calories translate into weight change:



Effect on weight



Mexico: based on year 1 purchasing data

- - 2.1 lb (- 0.96kg) per year



UK: projected

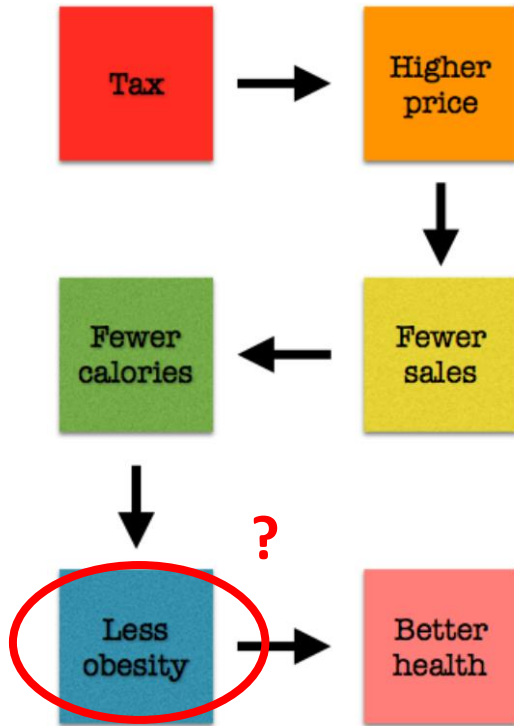
- - 0.9lb (- 0.4 kg) per year



Australia projections
20% SSB tax

- -0.5 kg/year (modest consumers)
- Up to -2.1kg/year (high consumers)

Effect on weight: limiting factors



- No effect on non-consumers
- Majority of effect will be complete by 2 years
- High consumers may be less responsive to price changes
- Likely substitution with other (non-taxed) calorie containing drinks

What will we drink instead?

Change in consumption (%)



+ 2

36kcal/100ml



+ 3

46kcal/100ml
(semi-skimmed)



+ 4

Up to 200kcal/cup
(tall latte, 2 sugars)



+ 4



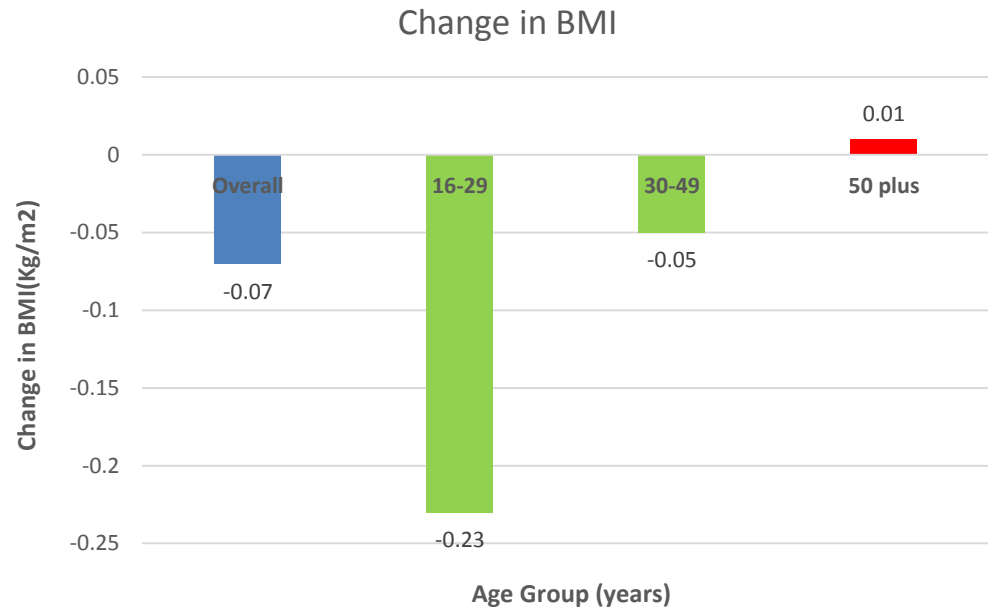
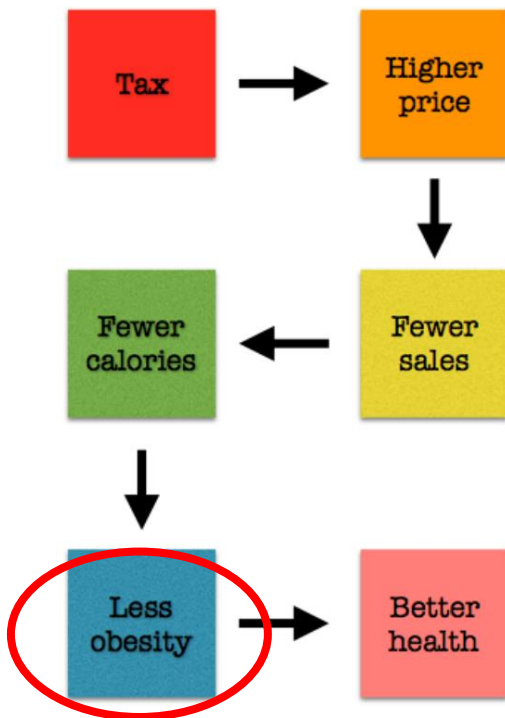
+ 8

- 16



42kcal/100ml

Effect on obesity (projected, UK)



- Obesity -1.3%
- Overweight -0.9%

Limited impact on obesity?

Experts agree

- Public Health England comprehensive review of the evidence for sugar reduction
- Concluded and emphasised that other strategies are likely to be more effective than a sugar tax for reducing sugar consumption:
 - Stricter regulations on marketing of high sugar foods
 - Reduce price promotions on high sugar foods and drinks
 - Product reformulation


Limited impact on obesity? Experts agree

Sugar 'obsession' could skew obesity strategy



By Alice Foster+ 
27-Jan-2016

Last updated on 28-Jan-2016 at 17:33 GMT

 Post a comment



Professor Paul Gately spoke at a childhood obesity conference last week

- “I am nervous that the focus on one particular nutrient might drive the agenda rather than evidence”
- “It will probably have a negligible impact, but it will tick the box of all those who have been fighting for it for so long. Then we can crack on with the job at hand

Limited impact on obesity? Experts agree



Ashley Adamson, Professor of Public Health Nutrition at Newcastle University says the sugar tax is "one piece in the jigsaw - it's not going to be the solution" to tackling childhood obesity.

Obesity is due to calorie excess – not just excess sugar

“Sugar is **not the sole contributor** to excess calories and increasing BMI, and in formulating a childhood obesity strategy the Government **will need to adopt a broader approach**... and should consider **calorie intake as a whole.**”

Adverse consequences of targeting single nutrients

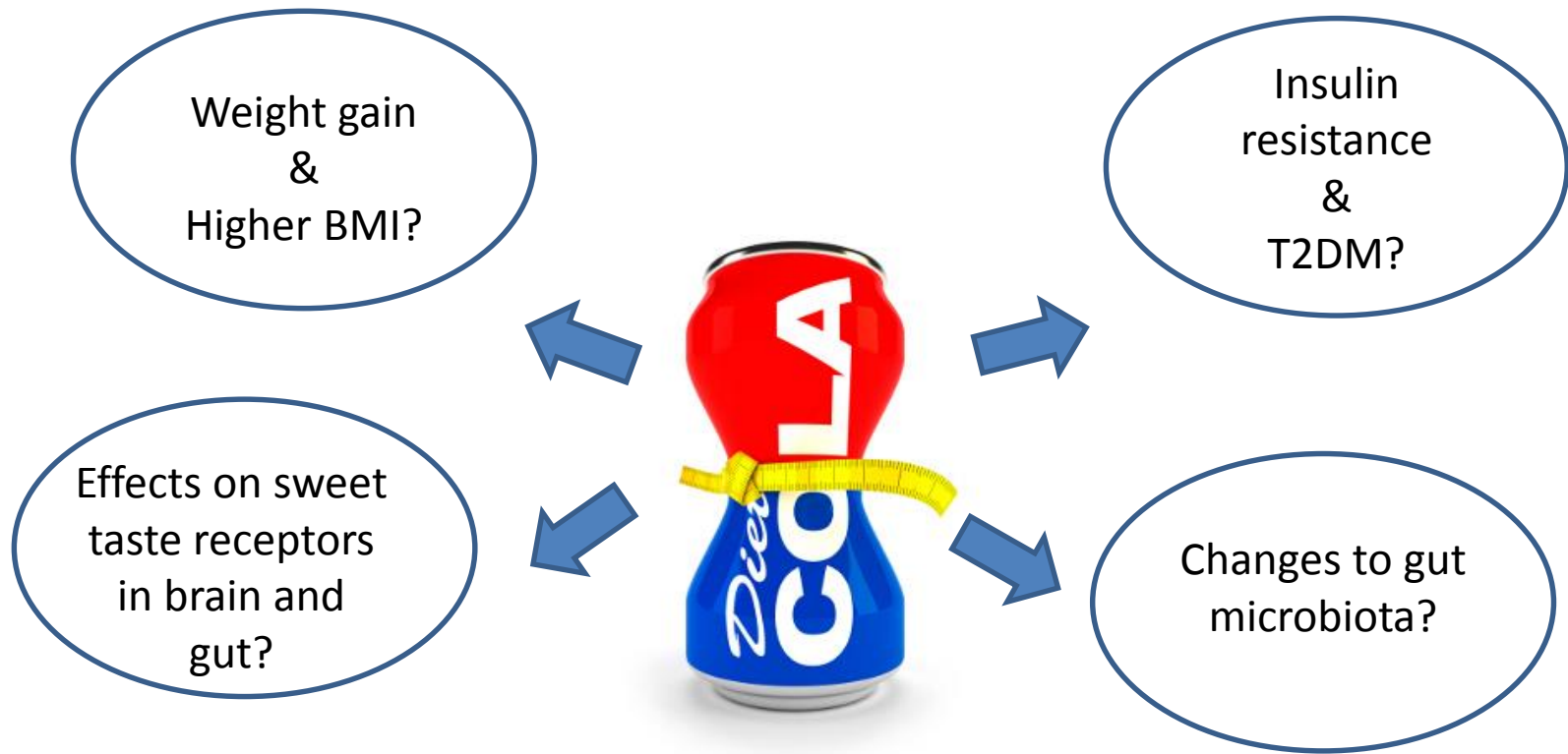
- Targeted reduction in saturated fat since the 1970s



- led to an increase in carbohydrate-based snacks and overall carbohydrate intake. Obesity levels soared.
- A tax on high saturated fat foods was ruled out over fears the foods would be substituted with high salt alternatives (Mytton et al, *BMJ* 2012;344:e2931)



Out of the frying pan...?



- Evidence as yet unclear
- Media coverage affects consumer choices
- Solving one health problem while creating another?

On a positive note...

Business | Tue Mar 29, 2016 11:07am BST

Related: BUSINESS, UK

AG Barr to cut sugar in soft drinks ahead of UK levy



Lucozade launches calorie-free Zero brand in response to sugar agenda

by Ben Bold, 30.03.2016



Summary

- Evidence and experts suggest a sugar tax will have limited impact on
 - Sugar consumption
 - Obesity
- It ignores the wider context of obesity causes
- If we are serious we should start with the higher impact strategies
- And a sugar tax...eventually

The last word

Perhaps we need the **threat** of a sugar tax
more than the tax itself!