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Diverting tampon taxes will not solve the issue of violence against women

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Diverting tampon taxes will not solve the issue of violence against women

In the UK, tampons and other sanitary products are taxed at 5%. Recently, European regulations have placed the power to tax feminine hygiene products on EU states^{1,2}. This meant that the UK could change taxation rates for these products (of course, there is now uncertainty ahead for the UK post 'Brexit'). In 2015, the UK Chancellor, George Osborne, announced that he intended to direct £15m raised from this tax towards charities, such as SafeLives and Women's Aid. Although money to fund prevention programs and services is sorely needed, we believe that funding such programmes by taxing women on (necessary) feminine products is a superficial and insufficient solution to the issue of violence towards women, and perpetuates gendered price discrimination.

Such an approach perpetuates the detrimental notion that violence towards women is solely a woman's issue³; and it certainly does not cover the cost needed to fund violence against women programmes. Diverting taxes or a percentage of profits of products solely consumed by women for this purpose and framing it as 'corporate social responsibility', as the author suggested, is plainly asking women to help pay for their own domestic abuse and violence services. Taxing (necessary) feminine products also contributes to the economic burden of women across the world. Dubbed the 'pink tax', women already pay more for their personal hygiene products than men do for the equivalent products⁴.

Rather than taxing women, such taxes should be abolished. Instead, governments should promote a societal approach to ending violence towards women.

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