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Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Tax: The Authors Reply

A study using manufacturing data showed that sales of sugar-sweetened beverages in Mexico fell 7.3 percent on average two years after the tax was implemented, compared to the period 2007–13.¹ These results align with those in our article (Mar 2017), which estimated changes in beverage purchases in a representative sample of urban households, and illustrate the robustness of our findings.

Both studies adjusted for time-varying factors that were associated with beverage purchases or sales but independent of the tax. Both papers examined per capita measures and controlled for economic factors.

Beverage industry statistics fail to account for population or economic growth and are misleading.

Given the strong evidence linking sugar-sweetened beverage consumption with weight gain and chronic diseases such as diabetes,^{2,3} reductions in the beverages' purchases are expected to lead to health improvements. The data in our study are for only two years. The obesity epidemic will take decades to slow down, stop, and final-

ly reverse itself, but other benefits might be seen sooner. Over ten years, Mexico's tax is estimated to prevent 189,300 diabetes cases, 20,400 heart attacks or strokes, and 18,900 deaths among Mexican adults ages 35–94, generating significant health care savings.⁴

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NOTES

- 1 Colchero MA, Guerrero-López CM, Molina M, Rivera JA. Beverage sales in Mexico before and after implementation of a sugar sweetened beverage tax. *PLoS One*. 2016;11(9):e0163463.
- 2 Malik VS, Popkin BM, Bray GA, Després JP, Willett WC, Hu FB. Sugar-sweetened beverages and risk of metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes: a meta-analysis. *Diabetes Care*. 2010; 33(11):2477–83.
- 3 Te Morenga L, Mallard S, Mann J. Dietary sugars and body weight: systematic review and meta-analyses of randomised controlled trials and cohort studies. *BMJ*. 2013;346:e7492.
- 4 Sánchez-Romero LM, Penko J, Coxson PG, Fernández A, Mason A, Moran AE, et al. Projected impact of Mexico's sugar-sweetened beverage tax policy on diabetes and cardiovascular disease: a modeling study. *PLoS Med*. 2016;13(11): e1002158.