

LETTERS

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Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Tax In Mexico

Arantxa Colchero and coauthors (Mar 2017) used household data and reported that a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages in Mexico—implemented on January 1, 2014—had yielded an average annual reduction of 7.6 percent in the purchase of the taxed beverages during the period 2014–15. However, the 2015 annual report of a leading beverage company in Mexico showed a 2.6 percent growth in the sale volume of Coca-Cola.¹ This figure reflects a recovery from the 2014 decline in volume that was associated with bad weather conditions.

Given that the study by Colchero and coauthors covered only 6,645 households and did not consider the national perspective or the impact of weather in 2014, it appears that the tax on sugar-sweetened beverages has not curbed the overall consumption of these beverages nationally in Mexico. Furthermore, the alleged reduction in the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages cannot be linked to a reduction in obesity levels,^{2,3}

which is the goal of the tax.⁴ In light of this observation, other countries considering the implementation of a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages may need to be cautious. The tax in Mexico has not yet produced the intended outcome.

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- 1 Coca-Cola FEMSA. Annual report 2015 [Internet]. Mexico City: Coca-Cola FEMSA; c 2015 [cited 2017 Mar 17]. Available from: https://www.coca-colafemsa.com/reporteannual2015/eng/financial_analisis.html
- 2 International Diabetes Foundation. IDF diabetes atlas—sixth edition: country summary table: estimates for 2014 [Internet]. Brussels: IDF; [cited 2017 Mar 17]. Available from: http://www.idf.org/sites/default/files/Atlas-poster-2014_EN.pdf
- 3 International Diabetes Foundation. IDF diabetes atlas—7th edition: diabetes by country: North America and Caribbean [Internet]. Brussels: IDF; [cited 2017 Mar 17]. Available for download from: <http://www.diabetesatlas.org/resources/2015-atlas.html>
- 4 Pan American Health Organization. Taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages as a public health strategy: the experience of Mexico [Internet]. Mexico City: PAHO; c 2015 [cited 2017 Mar 17]. p. 17. Available from: http://iris.paho.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/18391/9789275118719_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y