

Revised sugar labeling needed to protect consumers, says scientist

May 30 2012



(Medical Xpress) -- Noting that consumers have little guidance to help them make informed choices about added sugar, Yale Rudd Center researcher Jennifer Pomeranz contends that putting more information about sugar on food packages is necessary, achievable, and overdue, in a paper published in First Look of the [American Journal of Public Health](#).

Pomeranz, the Rudd Center's director of legal initiatives, says that the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) [sugar labeling](#) regulations are outdated and need to be reanalyzed given several important developments — including strong recommendations by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the American Heart Association to limit added sugar consumption; scientific studies indicating that high intake of added sugar has a negative impact on health and overall diet quality; and

the Institute of Medicine's recommendation that the FDA consider added sugar in a front-of-package labeling system.

The FDA's previous reluctance requiring manufacturers to disclose sugar and added sugar on their products packaging is based on outdated science and obsolete concerns, argues Pomeranz, noting that regulations in the area of food allergens and tobacco labeling have been successfully enacted amid these same concerns.

Further, she says, added sugar detection has a rich scientific history that is evolving to enable the FDA to test sugar-related claims on packaging. Pomeranz also contends that there should be a disqualifying level of added sugar in products for manufacturers to be able make health claims. Currently, she adds, many products high in added sugar have cartoon characters on the packaging to entice children and health claims to appease parents.

Increased labeling requirements, she suggests, can also lead to innovation and would likely encourage positive reformulation due to increased competition among companies trying to create and market products with less added sugar.

"The American Heart Association, the USDA, and the World Health Organization have issued strong standards that can guide the government. There are no longer any viable reasons to maintain outdated nutrition labeling standards for sugar," states Pomeranz.

Provided by Yale University

Citation: Revised sugar labeling needed to protect consumers, says scientist (2012, May 30) retrieved 24 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-05-sugar-consumers-scientist.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.