

Call for better sugary foods import data as obesity rises

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Better collection of data on food sugar levels will provide ammunition for the ongoing battle against rising obesity according to researchers at The University of Western Australia.

In a paper published in *BMC Public Health* online journal, the researchers also raised concerns over the increasing level of imported processed foods being consumed by Australians, and the high [sugar content](#) they contain.

As data collection of food sugar levels in Australia is limited, the research group used a wide range of local and international data to estimate if the amount of sugar we consume is in fact contributing to a significant public health problem.

One of the co-authors is Ms Wavne Ridders from the UWA-affiliate, the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research.

"By identifying foods high in sugar and using data relating to sugar supply and consumption over a 22 year period (1988 - 2010) our research generated a time series estimate of sugar in Australia's [food supply](#)," said Ms Ridders, a Telethon Institute Senior Analyst.

"What this showed was very large increases in the volume and value of imported sweetened products into Australia over that time.

"By taking into account all forms of sugar in the diet - refined sugar as

well as sugar added to manufactured or processed food or drinks imported into Australia - our research would suggest that per capita sugar consumption has been increasing since 1988 and this may well be affecting the dietary health of our nation," said Ms Ridders.

The Telethon Institute paper calls for better monitoring of [sugar](#) levels in all food - local and imported - consumed in Australia.

Provided by University of Western Australia

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