

Mexico's sugar-sweetened beverage tax may reduce diabetes, CVD, and costs over 10 years

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The national 10% tax on sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) in Mexico is projected to have a substantial impact on the burden of diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and mortality over the next 10 years, according to a modeling study published in *PLOS Medicine*. The study, conducted by Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo of the University of California San Francisco, and colleagues, indicates that 983 million international dollars in healthcare costs may be saved from the prevention of diabetes cases alone.

The prevalence of obesity and diabetes in Mexico has risen dramatically in recent years, and the rate of diabetes in Mexico currently ranks among the highest in the world. In order to address the obesity and diabetes epidemic, the Mexican government implemented a 10% excise tax on SSBs in 2014. In this study, the researchers developed a Mexico version of an established model of cardiovascular disease in the US (the Cardiovascular Disease Policy Model) and used survey data on household consumption in Mexico since the tax implementation to project health and healthcare cost impact in the next 10 years.

The researchers found that the 10% tax on SSBs will likely prevent approximately 189,300 (95% uncertainty interval [UI] 155,400-218,100) new cases of type 2 diabetes, 20,400 (95% UI 17,200-24,000) incident strokes and heart attacks, and 18,900 (95% UI 15,500-22,700) deaths over 10 years among adults 35-94 years of age, and is expected to result in 983 million international dollars (95% UI \$769 million-\$1,173 million) in savings in healthcare costs due to prevention of diabetes

cases.

The conclusions are limited by the assumptions in the model, and some epidemiologic parameters were drawn from populations outside Mexico. However, the findings suggest that, if consumption trends continue, the tax may confer significant benefits to people living in Mexico. The authors state, "[t]he SSB tax may be an important component in a multifaceted strategy by the Mexican government to curb the obesity and diabetes epidemic in Mexico."

More information: Luz Maria Sánchez-Romero et al, Projected Impact of Mexico's Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Tax Policy on Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease: A Modeling Study, *PLOS Medicine* (2016). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1002158](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002158)

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