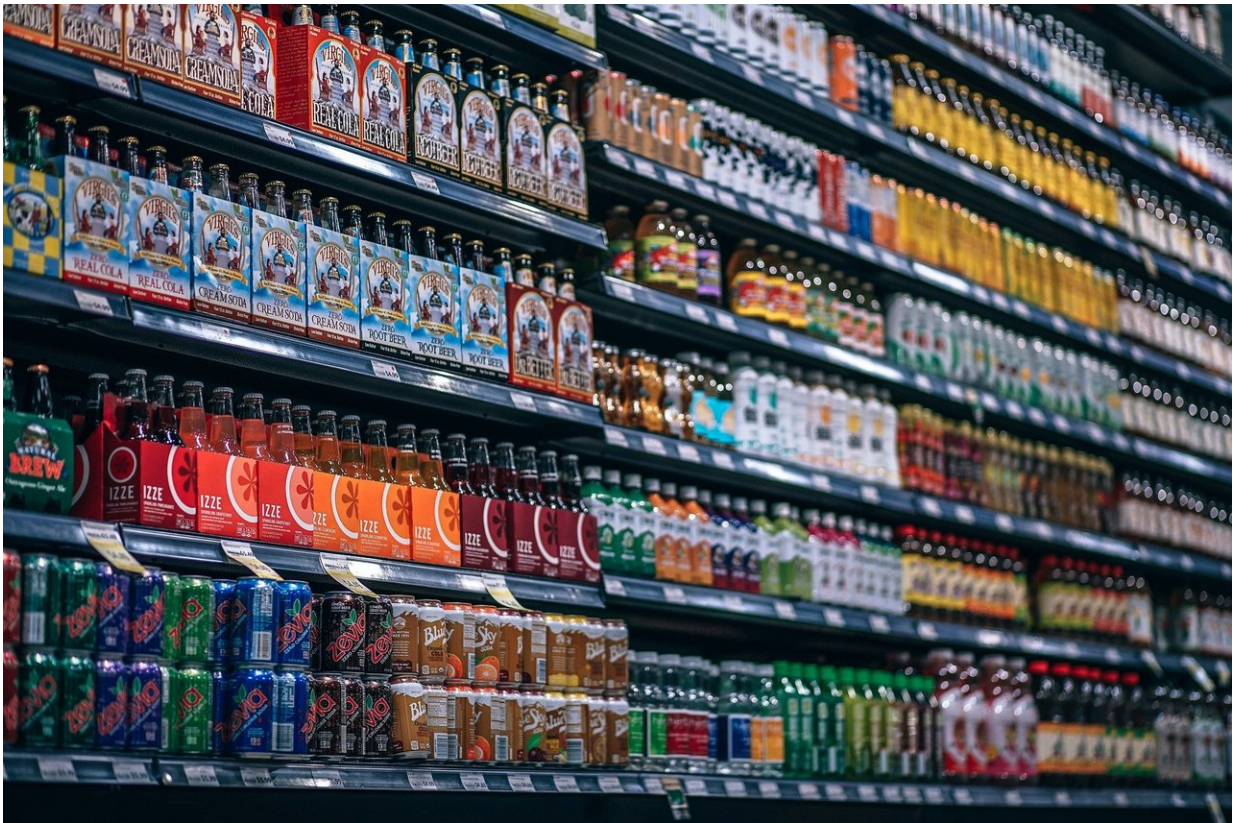


Assessing attitudes and readiness for a sugar sweetened beverage-free healthcare center

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In a study published in the multi-disciplinary peer-reviewed journal *PLOS One*, CUNY SPH Associate Professor Chris Palmedo and co-author Lauren Gordon, Research Project Manager at the Mount Sinai

Health System, assess the readiness for a sugar sweetened beverage-free zone at a community health clinic in the Bronx, NY.

The study employed focus group interviews with video clips to explore belief patterns and message framing of sugar-sweetened beverages (e.g. soda and energy drinks) among patients and employees at the [health center](#). Informed by the literature on multilevel frameworks on change readiness and [social marketing](#), the researchers sought to better understand the social practices, motivations, and emotions behind sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) consumption, and assess staff and patient attitudes about the imposition of the SSB-free zone before implementation.

"There were quite a few relevant findings that emerged from these sessions," Dr. Palmedo says. "One surprise to me was that both patients and staff wanted more information about the dangers of SSB consumption. Public health researchers may be well aware that these products are associated with numerous non-communicable diseases, but our study reminds us that these dangers may not be top-of-mind to the general public."

Another important finding, Palmedo says, is that most participants reported being supportive of the SSB-free zone, but still felt that most other people would not be.

"I interpret this to be a reminder of how entrenched beverage companies are in the American ethos," Palmedo observes. "It still feels 'wrong' to try to limit our access to a ubiquitous consumer product, no matter how unhealthful it may be."

As the authors conclude, "An evidence-based combination of education and [policy change](#) seems to be most likely to result in sustainable behavior change in this important public health domain."

More information: P. Christopher Palmedo et al. How to be SSB-free: Assessing the attitudes and readiness for a sugar sweetened beverage-free healthcare center in the Bronx, NY, *PLOS ONE* (2019). [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0215127](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0215127)

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