

Coca-Cola spent 8 mn euros to influence research in France: report

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An investigation by a French newspaper said that Coca-Cola paid millions to have research published that diverted attention away from the detrimental effect of sugary drinks on health

US beverage giant Coca-Cola paid more than eight million euros in France to health professionals and researchers in a bid to influence research, according to an investigation by French newspaper Le Monde published on Thursday.

The newspaper said the aim of the funds was to have research published that would divert attention away from the detrimental effect of sugary drinks on [health](#).

Le Monde, in its front page story, said Coca-Cola paid more than "eight million euros (\$9 million) to experts, various medical organisations and also sporting and event organisations."

It said in France, as elsewhere, the financing fell under communication or sponsorship and not as authentic scientific work.

Coca-Cola has been under a similar spotlight before, after the *New York Times* in 2015 reported that the company gave financial backing to scientists who argued that having more exercise is more important to avoiding obesity than cutting calories.

In the outcry that followed that report, the firm promised to improve transparency and publish on its site the names of experts and activities it finances in the United States.

It did the same for France in 2016 following pressure from the NGO Foodwatch and it is this data that has been intensely analysed by Le Monde.

Le Monde said that as in the US, the company's financing is aimed at "making people forget the risks that come with consuming its drinks".

In a separate report, the *Journal of Public Health Policy* said Coca-Cola

added multiple clauses to ensuring the research it funds produces the desired result.

These include preventing results that displease the company being published by reserving the right to break contracts without giving a reason.

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