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## Letter to the Editor

## Taxing "Sin drinks": From economy to sugar control

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Sugar (sweet drinks and processed foods), alcohol, and tobacco are the agents of true epidemics of modern times, the industrial epidemics which rank first among the avoidable causes of deaths and illnesses. Accordingly, overconsumption of processed sweet drinks and processed foods must be fought in the same ways as done for alcohol and tobacco.

Andreyeva and colleagues estimated the impact of taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages for reducing obesity using the evidence from alcohol and tobacco (Andreyeva et al., 2011).

Edwards commented on their paper with skepticism (Edwards, 2011). However, despite being an economist, he failed to discuss Adam Smith's visionary theory. In 1776, in *The Wealth of Nations*, Smith stated that: "Sugar, rum, and tobacco are commodities which are nowhere necessities of life, which have become objects of almost universal consumption, and which are therefore extremely proper subjects of taxation."

Modern epidemics need agents plus companies which, aggressively but subtly, market them. Therefore, intervening on the economy offers more than any physiopathological-psycho-social theory intervention ever could. Regulation of advertising and taxes are effective preventive actions which are mandatory because firms are not going to sacrifice their profits for health concerns if they are not required to do so.

Taxation measures also allow investing in and allocating new resources for those populations most affected by industrial epidemics, populations which are usually the most deprived.

**Conflict of interest statement**

None declared.

**References**

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