

Consumption Patterns of Sugar-Sweetened Beverages and Household Sugar Among Adults Living in Southgate Phoenix

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Abstract

Background: Worldwide, there has been an increase in sugar consumption together with evidence that supports the link with lifestyle diseases and the rising burden on the health care system.

The Sugar-Sweetened Beverage (SSB) industry in South Africa came under scrutiny due to the high sugar levels present in SSB formulations and resulted in the Health Promotion Levy in 2018 as an intervention to decrease added sugar consumption.

Aim: This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of the South African Health Promotion Levy or Sugar Tax by investigating the consumption and purchasing patterns of SSB and of table sugar in households in the community of Southgate Phoenix.

Methodology: In this cross-sectional survey, 399 participants from Southgate Phoenix completed an online survey through convenience sampling method completed an online consumer survey. Descriptive statistics were used to define the proportion of responses for each question and the chi-square goodness-of-fit test was used for categorical variables.

Results: Demographic indicators revealed that 66.2%(n=264) of the participants were female and 32.3%(n=129) were male. A significant 55.1% purchased brown sugar, and there was a significant correlation between income and frequency with which they purchased sugar and the size of sugar packaging they purchase. Those with higher income tend to purchase sugar less frequently ($\rho = .187$, $p < .001$) and in smaller packaging ($\rho = -.145$, $p = .006$). Further analysis using the Mann Whitney test shows that males put significantly more sugar in their tea/coffee than do females, $Z = -2.779$, $p = .005$. The amount of sugar added to tea/coffee was negatively correlated with age, $\rho = -.186$, $p < .001$. 66.2% of respondents highlighted Taste is a major factor purchasing Sugar sweetened beverages.

A significant proportion of 18-25-year-olds are not aware of the sugar tax, while a significant proportion of 26-35-year-olds are aware of this tax, $\chi^2 (4) = 13.924$, $p = .008$.

Conclusion: Whilst the prevalence of obesity increases, greater scrutiny is required regarding the effectiveness of the levy, knowledge related to the levy as compared to actual household sugar consumption.