



African Population and
Health Research Center

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Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Taxes

Separating Myths from Evidence-Based Facts



What the Evidence Shows:

Sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) taxes are being implemented worldwide as a public health policy. Here's what the latest research tells us about their real-world impacts.



50+

Countries have implemented SSB taxes globally

33%

Average price increase of taxed beverages



33%

Average reduction in SSB purchases following tax implementation

✗ MYTH

SSB taxes don't actually reduce consumption - people will just pay the higher prices and continue drinking the same amount.



✓ FACT

Taxes do actually inform consumer choices. Research shows SSB taxes consistently reduce consumption. Price changes really do matter to most people.

✗ MYTH

These taxes only affect low-income families unfairly. Furthermore, increased taxes have no impact on people's health.

**✓ FACT**

Evidence shows that health taxes reduce consumption of harmful products and lead to significant health benefits over time. The goal is to encourage healthier choices that will improve community health.

**✗ MYTH**

SSB taxes are just a money grab by governments and don't generate meaningful revenue for public health programs.

**✓ FACT**

SSB taxes generate substantial revenue that can be reinvested in public health education and different other sectors. Additionally they also reduce healthcare costs over time because a healthy population unburdens the healthcare system.



✗ MYTH

People will just go elsewhere to buy cheaper sugary drinks, so the taxes don't work.

**FACT**

While this is a likely possibility it doesn't undermine the overall positive health impacts. The net effect is still a meaningful reduction in SSB consumption.

**✗ MYTH**

SSB taxes are experimental policies with no proven track record of success.

**FACT**

Over 50 countries worldwide have successfully implemented SSB taxes and data confirms their effectiveness in reducing consumption and improving health.

**✗ MYTH**

The taxes are too small to make any real difference - people won't change their behavior for a few extra cents.

**FACT**

Even modest tax rates create meaningful price signals that change consumer behavior.

**Research Sources**

National Center for Health Research

UC Berkeley School of Public Health

Boston University School of Public Health



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Transforming lives in Africa through research.

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