Assessing the Potential Effectiveness of Food and Beverage Taxes on Subsidies for Improving Public Health: A Systematic Review of Prices, Demand and Body Weight Outcomes

Parallel to the rise of obesity in the past decades has been the rise in the prices of fruits and vegetables and the decrease in the price of sodas. This study aims to provide a systematic review of recent studies from the United States on price elasticity of demand for sugar-sweetened beverages, fast food, and fruits and vegetables.

The evidence provided in this review suggests that sugar-sweetened beverages are price elastic and that a 20% increase in their prices would reduce their consumption by 24%. Based on existing low state-level taxes, results looking at the link between soda taxes and weight outcomes found minimal impact on weight. Despite mitigated results, Powell et al. concluded that pricing instruments should continue to be considered and evaluated as potential policy instruments to address public health risks.