Taxes on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages to Reduce Overweight and Obesity in Middle-Income Countries: A Systematic Review

While previous systematic reviews examined the effect of the sugar-sweetened beverage tax in high-income countries, little work has been done as to how it might affect middle-income countries. This systematic review aimed to synthesise existing evidence on the effectiveness of the tax in middle-income countries in comparison to the evidence from high-income countries.

Three specific objectives were defined regarding (i) the price of goods, (ii) the energy intake and the impact on different socio-economic groups and (iii) obesity trends. Based on the key findings, Nakhimovsky et al. developed a set of six policy recommendations. Overall, while this systematic review cannot fully determine whether a sugar-sweetened beverage tax will be more or less effective in middle-income countries, it indicates that the tax may be a promising policy for these countries as it will increase soda prices sufficiently to prevent further growth in the prevalence of overweight and obesity.