

TIME TO TAX THE SUGARY DRINKS

Obesity is a modern epidemic worldwide. In Pakistan majority of teenagers of all social classes are near the upper limit or above the required body mass index. Apart from being a risk factor for cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus, gout and degenerative arthritides. It also results in nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) which can progress to steatohepatitis, fibrosis, cirrhosis and currently considered a prime cause of hepatocellular carcinoma.

Improvement in socioeconomic status, lack of physical activities, sporting and virtual addictions of teenagers to electronic gadgetry like computer cell phones and videogames do contribute to weight gain. But in my opinion the limitless use of high energy drinks and sugary drinks contribute a lot to weight gain

in teenaged youth. If this trend of weight gain is not discouraged, then a couple of decades from now we will have a great burden of obesity related various diseases which will enhance health spending of the individuals and nation as a whole.

I do not think teens can listen and respond to advice not to take extra calories. The only solution in my opinion is to tax the sugary drinks and to observe the amount of consumption and to conduct epidemiological studies pre and post tax to assess the impact on obesity.

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