Obesity issues in Chile

Chile has the highest per capita consumption of sugary drinks in the world.

As part of efforts to combat skyrocketing rates of obesity, the Chilean government enacted the Food Advertising and Labeling Law.

Reduced purchases of sugary drinks

After the implementation of the policy package, there was a decrease of:

- 1.23.8 mL per person per day in the household volume of high sweetened beverages purchased.

The largest decrease in household purchases was among these beverages:

- high sweetened fruit: 45%
- dairy: 35%

Reduced purchases of high sweetened beverages purchased increased by:

- 4.8% after the implementation of the policy package.

Impact of Chile’s policies

Three studies recently published in peer-reviewed journals found that Chilean households purchased fewer sugary drinks (a 24% reduction) while Chilean children saw less advertising and marketing of unhealthy food and drinks, thanks to the suite of policies contained in the Food Advertising and Labeling Law.

Child-directed marketing on cereal packages

The percentage of food and beverage products that targeted children decreased:

- 36% before implementation of the law to 21% after implementation.

The percentage of “high-in” packages that used at least one child-directed marketing strategy decreased:

- 43% before implementation of the law to 15% after implementation.
- 36% before implementation of the law to 15% after implementation.
- 25% before implementation of the law to 0% after implementation.

Impact of restriction of ads to Chilean children

Children who viewed more television saw higher decreases in exposure to advertising for unhealthy foods.

Exposure to advertising of unhealthy foods featuring child-focused tactics such as cartoon characters decreased by:

- 44% for preschoolers
- 58% for adolescents
- 35% for preschoolers
- 62% for adolescents

Lessons for the Caribbean

Obesity issues in Chile

- 52% of Chilean adults and 34% of Chilean children under the age of 6 were overweight or obese.

Policy actions in Chile

Increased taxes on sugary drinks from 18% to 18% (2014).

Implemented the first-ever mandatory national system of front-of-package labels on foods containing added sugars, sodium or saturated fats exceeding set thresholds (2016).

Prohibited the sales of unhealthy products in or near schools.

Restricted unhealthy food marketing and advertising to children.

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WHAT IS THE CARIBBEAN DOING?

**OBESITY IN THE CARIBBEAN**

- 1 in 3 Caribbean Children is overweight or obese
- Unhealthy diets are a major risk factor for NCDs and contribute to overweight and obesity
- Levels of adult obesity in the Caribbean are among the highest in the world
- Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are responsible for
  - 8 out of every 10 deaths
  - 40% of premature adult deaths

**POLICY ACTIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN**

- **MANDATORY ‘HIGH IN’ FRONT OF PACKAGE NUTRITION WARNING LABELLING** to empower consumers to make healthier food choices.
- **BANNING THE SALE AND MARKETING OF SWEET BEVERAGES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS** and ensuring the availability of free drinking water to reduce the consumption of these beverages among children.
- **TAXATION OF SWEET BEVERAGES** of at least 20% to reduce the consumption of these beverages among children.

**HOW IS THE REGION DOING?**

**MANDATORY ‘HIGH IN’ FRONT OF PACKAGE NUTRITION WARNING LABELS**

Through CARICOM’s Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ), the region is currently in the process of revising food labelling standards to include front of package ‘high in’ warning labels in order to help consumers make healthier food choices as it relates to key nutrients linked to non-communicable diseases (NCDs). While FOPL has been a point of discussion in the Caribbean, it has also been a point of contention with push back from some private sector interests.

**BANNING THE SALE AND MARKETING OF SWEET BEVERAGES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS**

Only a handful of countries in the region (Bermuda, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Bahamas, Grenada) have national guidelines or policies restricting or banning sweet beverages in schools. None of these policies/guidelines ban marketing of these products in school settings resulting in significant levels of in-school marketing in various forms. The HCC is tracking the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages in schools to provide the evidence for policy action.

**TAXATION OF SWEET BEVERAGES**

Barbados was the tenth country globally and the first country in the Caribbean to implement a tax on sugar sweetened beverages. In 2019 Bermuda implemented one of the highest SSB taxes globally at 75%, Dominica has also implemented SSB taxes.

**RESTRICTIONS ON MARKETING AND ADVERTISING TARGETING CHILDREN**

There are no regulations on marketing to children in the region. As a result, there are numerous instances of commercial marketing practices which specifically target children by the food and beverage industry in the region. Industry engages in both direct marketing to children, as well as promotion of brands and products through Corporate Social Responsibility activities. The HCC is tracking the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children in out-of-school settings in order to provide the evidence for policy action.

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The Childhood Obesity Prevention Scorecard (COPS) was developed to help CSO advocates and policymakers track the implementation of related policies and legislation.