Health Impact Assessment on a Sugar Sweetened Drinks Tax

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Childhood Obesity

- Almost 1 in 4 Children by age 3 overweight or obese (GUI)
- Previously 1 in 5 teenagers overweight or obese
- Longitudinal survey *Growing Up in Ireland – The First Findings from the Child Cohort at 13 Years* show that this figure is now 1 in 4 also
- MAJOR implications for Healthcare System
- Obesity in adults costs €1.13billion
SSDs Consumption

- 2010- 83 litres of carbonated beverages per capita
- Children 5-18 yrs 75% and over consume carbonated SSDs
- Teenagers highest daily consumption
- 185mls -to 558mls high consumers
- Children 122mls-409mls/day
Background

- Minister established SAGO 2011
- A range of actions to halt overweight and obesity levels
- SSDs tax a priority action
- Proposal put to all Gov Ministers 2011
- Most Ministers supportive
- Minister for Children and Youth Affairs
- Dept of Finance requested a Health Impact Assessment on this measure be carried out
HIA

- Undertaken to identify the potential health impacts of a proposed SSDs tax

- to provide supporting information and an evidence-base to inform conclusions and SAGO recommendations
Components of HIA

- Set up a Steering Group
- Develop a population profile
- Hold a stakeholder consultation
- Commission a literature review
- Carry out a consumer survey

Parallel Technical Report on modelling work was carried out by University of Oxford team, lead by Prof Mike Rayner
HIA SG membership

- Steering Group established
- Chaired by Prof Donal O’Shea, Ireland’s key expert on Obesity
- Representative SAGO bodies
- Departments of Children and Agriculture
- Prof of Economics, NUI Dublin
- Institute of Public Health commissioned by DOH to carry out HIA
- Monthly meetings April to October 2012
Steering Group

- Steering Group had the additional benefit of information from a separate modelling analysis provided by Professor Mike Rayner and his team at University of Oxford.
- Prof Mike Rayner attended Steering Group meetings.
The Task

- Steering Group asked to consider a proposed introduction of a *10% tax* on SSDs with intent of helping reduce overweight and obesity.
- Operating from the understanding that this proposed tax, if introduced, would be *one of a* suite of measures to address obesity.
SAGO

- Use HIA Report evidence to minimise or eliminate any of the identified negative impacts of the proposal.
- The Steering Group also considered the implications of not introducing the tax.
HIA outline

- Draft report structure and text
- Stakeholder consultation event report
- Consumer research
- Literature Review
- Draft conclusions document
Report

- Report structure
- Appropriate studies in literature review for a strong evidence base
- Systematic reviews
- Meta-analysis
- Industry v non industry funded research
- Made conclusions to inform SAGO
Technical Report

- Professor Mike Rayner invited by DOH to model the effects of a 10% SSDs Tax in Ireland on overweight and obesity
- Process- to describe the effects by age, income group and consumption- regular vs low consumers
- No modelling work carried out on children
- Work carried out in parallel
Stakeholder Consultation

- To inform stakeholders of the process to date.
- To provide an opportunity for stakeholders to share their knowledge and opinions on potential health impacts of the proposal, both positive and negative.
- To provide an opportunity for stakeholders to make recommendations on how the proposal could be enhanced for better health.
Key themes

- Employment/ Industry impacts
- Tax implementation
- Methodology & Evidence
- Potential Inequalities
- Alternative/Additional suggestions
- Consumer Response to a 10% tax
Consumer Attitude & Behaviour Survey

- The Department of Health, commissioned Ipsos MRBI to measure public attitudes and behaviours towards steps to tackle the high consumption of sugar sweetened drinks.

- A questionnaire (based on questions from the DOH) was administered to a national quota sample of 1,020 representative of the 3.4 million adults aged 18 years and over, covering 100 sampling points throughout ROI.

- Interviews were conducted using a face-to-face approach, at home addresses between 16th and 25th May 2012.
Findings

- almost universal agreement that Irish children drink too many SSDs.
- widely believed that SSDs contribute significantly to obesity
- Almost three-quarters of those surveyed have purchased SSDs in the past year.
- 44% claim they would buy these drinks less frequently if the price increased by 10 per cent.
- Women are more likely to respond to such a price increase.
- 40% claim they would switch to diet drinks if they were priced cheaper than SSDs while a similar number claim they would not.
- 60% claim that they would drink water if they drank less SSDs.
The HIA process demonstrated that:

- Obesity is multifaceted with many factors influencing the basic drivers of energy intake and energy expenditure including environment, socio-economic, psychosocial and genetic factors.
- SSDs are a source of energy intake with little or no other nutrient contribution to the diet.
- Price increases tend to decrease demand but the degree to which this happens is variable because consumer behaviour and industry response to a tax is difficult to predict.
- The evidence linking SSDs consumption with increases in energy intake is in favour of a positive relationship.
- The evidence linking SSDs consumption with weight gain is suggestive but not conclusive. Literature is contradictory and study quality is low to medium.
Technical Report
Findings

- A 10% tax on SSDs predicted to reduce the number of obese adults by approximately 10,000 and the number of adults who are overweight, including obese by 14,000.
- This represents a reduction in obesity of 1.25% and in overweight, including obese, of 0.67%.
- Of the estimated 10,000 fewer obese adults, approximately 80% are regular SSDs consumers.
- The impacts on men and women are similar.
- The average reduction in energy intake in the adult population of Ireland as a result of a 10% tax is predicted to be 2.1kcal per week; the predicted reduction is greater among younger people and in regular SSD consumers.
SAGO discussion with Minister

- Strongly recommended that Minister make proposal for 10% tax (1 body not in agreement)

- This is predicted to reduce obese adults by 10,000 and overweight adults by 4,000

- Publication of the HIA Report
Minister’s proposal

- 10% tax
- Money saved invested in HP initiatives
- Healthcare savings reduced by not having to treat 14,000 adults with BMI over 25
- with co-morbidities- type 2 diabetes, increased CVD symptoms and other NCDs
- Letter to Minister for Finance
- SSDs already taxed at 23%
Future Action

- Draw up a proposal for measures to reduce the availability of foods and drinks on top shelf of Food Pyramid (HFSS foods with no additional nourishment) – including fiscal policies
- SAGO Working Group established end of Jan 2013
- Terms of reference being drawn up
- Task: draft a scooping paper for June meeting of SAGO to inform discussion on future action.