Sugar, sugar...honey, money

By Aws Alani, UK

The sugar tax is finally upon us, but are corner shops or supermarkets for that matter likely to worry about this potentially threatening change to their flagship product line? The tax targets all drinks and equates to a tax of 24 pence per litre on those with the most sugar content. This could potentially equate to an increase in the price to the consumer, but bearing in mind that soft drinks are more accessible and cost less in the UK than water in many Third World countries, it is doubtful that things will change markedly.

Opinion

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There is the argument that taxing tobacco has had an effect on the uptake of smoking and the consequence addiction, but the evidence for this is relatively sparse and weak. Although a worthy initiative, taxing drinks may result in a greater squeeze on those who can afford it the least and I doubt whether little Jimmy will stop his tearful tantrums for penny sweets as a result of a celebrity chef’s campaign as our sugar saviour. As a child of the eighties, these celebrity-led campaigns remind me of rock bands who decided that overconsumption is manufacturing paincake bliss after inordinate tastings, it seems to be important to everyone. As a result, food is an emotive issue that affects oral and general health in ways that may not be readily apparent to our patients. I have an old friend in Florida, who I visited last year. He is a specialist in periodontology and runs a successful, swish, modern referral practice. As a matter of routine, he tells patients they need to stop carbohydrate intake post-surgery. Once patients understand that this improves outcomes owing to decreased plaque build-up on the wound edges, they are receptive to this brief change in their diet. He also advocates periodontal medicine while identifying stress as a risk factor for periodontitis.

Research by Prof Iain Chapple in Birmingham investigating the effect of diet on periodontal disease confirms that one is what one eats and the gingivae follow suit. Purely overconsumption of sugar causes an inordinate amount of health problems. Indeed, Type II diabetes and obesity are leading causes of death and disability in the US, the birthplace of the canned. Overconsumption of sugar causes an inordinate amount of health problems. Indeed, Type II diabetes and obesity are leading causes of death and disability in the US, the birthplace of the canned.