



Obesity News

Number 191, 17 September 2014

Obesity News has links to recently published news stories relating to obesity prevention from a variety of online sources.

New Zealand

NZ – The coming election

[Food policies – election 2014](#)

Good Food Game asked each political party about its priorities relating to the production, marketing and consumption of food in New Zealand?" The responses are on their website.

Source: Good Food Game, 26 Aug 2014

[How to make your vote count](#)

As reported in the previous issue of Obesity News, Healthy Food Guide looks at some policy options that might help prevent the risk of obesity and asks the political parties about their policies on obesity and nutrition.

Source: Healthy Food Guide, 18 Aug 2014

[Which political party will help you live longer?](#)

Geoff Simmons reviews political parties' policies on disease prevention, prioritising health care spending, and efficiency.

Gareth's World, 25 Aug 2014

[Vote for a fizzy drinks tax \(Facebook link\)](#)

You may wish to email our political leaders and tell them you will be voting for a party that will introduce a tax on Sugar Sweetened Beverages. Put "I support a tax on Sugar Sweetened Beverages" in the subject line.

Source: Don't Buy Type 2 Diabetes /FOE Facebook post, 11 Sep 2014

NZ - Dirty Politics: Katherine Rich and Public Health

Nicky Hager's book "Dirty Politics" includes evidence that former National MP Katherine Rich, Chief Executive of the Food and Grocery Council (FGC) and a member of the Health Promotion Agency (HPA) board, has been undermining public health. Rich has failed to address, let alone attempt to refute, this evidence.

[Emails seem to back Hager claim](#)

The hacker "Rawshark" has released emails that appear to back up claims in *Dirty Politics* that the Whale Oil blog was used by Katherine Rich to attack her critics including public health advocates.

Source: Radio NZ, 3 Sep 2014

[Greens call for Rich to go from HPA board](#)

Green Party health spokesperson Kevin Hague says: "Katherine Rich, Carrick Graham and Cameron Slater have all been involved in a systematic undermining of health promotion in New Zealand. She cannot tenably remain on the board."

Source: Radio NZ, 3 Sep 2014

[Former MP under fire](#)

The boss of the country's main tobacco, alcohol and junk food lobby [a Dom Post journalist's words] is under fire again, standing accused by a group of health experts of a conflict of interest and undermining public health.

Source: Stuff, 5 Sep 2014

[Public health experts call for an inquiry on Katherine Rich](#)

Public health experts have released a letter sent the Prime Minister calling for an inquiry into Katherine Rich's apparent conflict of interest. Evidence in *Dirty Politics* shows she has been denigrating and undermining population health professionals.

Source: Joint Media Statement, Scoop, 10 Sep 2014

[Katherine Rich stands firm against calls to resign](#)

Katherine Rich has issued a written statement saying she has no intention of resigning from the HPA board, but fails to address the evidence in *Dirty Politics*. (The HPA was set up in 2012 as a Crown entity to promote healthy lifestyles, replacing the Health Sponsorship Council and Alcohol Advisory Council.)

Source: TVNZ, 11 Sep 2014

[Health agency won't probe Rich](#)

Without having read the letter from 33 public health experts, HPA board chair Dr Lee Mathias nevertheless had no doubt about Ms Rich's integrity. She described Ms Rich as an active supporter of the agency.

Source: Radio NZ, 7 Sep 2014

[Cash for comment and New Zealand's MOD squad](#)

Peter Griffin from the Science Media Centre provides an excellent backgrounder on *Dirty Politics*, which he describes as giving us "a window into the tactics of rightwing bloggers, lobbyists and political strategists intent on discrediting scientists who present evidence that conflicts with their political and commercial interests". He highlights emails from Katherine Rich in which she undermines public health efforts, including calls for a ban on energy drinks in schools.

Source: SciBlog, 18 Aug 2014

[Evidence of the dubious tactics of the alcohol industry](#)

Prof Doug Sellman writes on how *Dirty Politics* shows how the alcohol industry works behind the scenes to actively try and smear the professional reputation of people who promote effective alcohol reforms.

Source: Media Release, Doug Sellman / NZ Doctor, 19 Aug 2014

[More suspicions about the real Katherine Rich](#)

Revelations in *Dirty Politics* led food writer Wendyl Nissen to have suspicions about how she came to be the subject of attacks on the Whale Oil blog.

Source: NZ Herald, 16 Sep 2014

NZ – Nigel Latta on sugar

[Nigel Latta: Is sugar the new fat? \(video 45 mins\)](#)

Did you watch Nigel Latta's 'Is Sugar the New Fat?' on TV? He shows how much sugar is hidden in our processed food and what it's doing to our health.

In: TV One, 2 Sep 2014

[Nigel Latta's show on sugar is one of the most influential pieces of TV this year](#)

Nigel Latta's show on sugar was one of the best of his series. The show's wrap-up made for one of TV's most powerful moments for the year. The show simply and fairly illustrated the impact that excess sugar is having on our health.

Source: Gareth's World, 3 Sep 2014

[Sugar leaves sour taste in Latta's mouth](#)

This review of Latta's show includes comments made by health professionals and the country's main junk food lobbyist, Katherine Rich.

Source: Stuff, 3 Sep 2014

NZ – more on sugar

[Anti-sugar campaigners 'wowers'](#)

The Food and Grocery Council (FGC), has flown in British anti-tax campaigner Chris Snowdon to help lobby against taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages. He says the proposed tax is being driven by public health wowers.

Source: Sunday Star Times / Stuff, 31 Aug 2014

[Tired attempt to pass off venal campaign as debate](#)

Ian Powell, Executive Director of the Association of Salaried Medical Specialists, is not impressed with the FGC: "The decision to bring British anti-tax spin doctor Christopher Snowdon to New Zealand last week was just another tired disingenuous attempt to dress up a venal campaign as a genuine debate."

Source: Association of Salaried Medical Specialists /Scoop, 1 Sep 2014

[Heart Foundation weighs in on sugary drinks debate](#)

The Heart Foundation says it's time our politicians took a stand on sugary drinks.

Source: Heart Foundation, 5 Sep 2014

[Goodbye sugar-sweetened beverages](#)

Northland DHB is to remove sugar-sweetened beverages from onsite cafeterias and vending machines from October this year.

Source: Media release, Northland DHB, Scoop, 25 Aug 2014

NZ – Food marketing to children

[Advertising to kids – The Mother of all stuff ups](#)

Gareth Morgan has lots to say about the dirty tricks Big Food and Big Beverage use to target children.

Source: Gareth's World, 9 Sep 2014

[New World wants to turn your kids into fat zombie consumers](#)

Many of New World's 'Little Shop' collectables are of questionable nutritional content. Yet they can be advertised to kids because of weak, voluntary regulations.

Source: Gareth's World, 28 Aug 2014

[Giveaway 'harming children'](#)

A Dom Post article traces the debate on New World collectables including an unconvincing response from Foodstuffs (owners of New World).

Source: Dominion Post/Stuff, 1 Sep 2014

[Food company policies in Australia, NZ and Fiji found wanting](#)

This paper examined policies and commitments of major packaged food and soft drink manufacturers and fast-food restaurants with respect to reducing food marketing to children and product (re)formulation. It found an absence of strong policies and corresponding actions and concluded that government action will be needed to drive improved company performance.

In: Critical Public Health, online 19 August

NZ – Other

[Heart Foundation calls for Children's Food & Nutrition Plan](#)

The Heart Foundation is calling for a comprehensive national food and nutrition plan for children. Their infographic explains why it is needed.

Source: Heart Foundation, Sep 2014

[Empty fridges highlight Kiwi poverty](#)

Campbell Live looked at the fridges of families across the country. At 6 schools it was the kids themselves who photographed their fridges. The emptiness was disturbing.

Source: TV 3, 1 Sep 2014

[Filling the fridges for young Kiwis](#)

Several schools highlight ways they are showing kids food skills and knowledge that can help them break free of the cycle of deprivation.

Source: TV 3, 2 Sep 2014

[Overweight and obesity in 4–5-year-old children in New Zealand](#)

The results from the first 4 years (2009–2012) of the B4School Check programme reaffirms the high prevalence of overweight and obesity in pre-school children and demonstrates the variations in prevalence when using different reference standards.
In: Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health, online 26 Aug 2014

[Child obesity: The issue no one wants to raise](#)

News that parents don't recognise their children are overweight, and that doctors fail to point it out, hit the headlines again recently. Professors Barry Taylor, Boyd Swinburn and Elaine Rush comment.
Source: Stuff, 2 Sep 2014

Australia

[Tackling obesity will help reduce budget fat](#)

"The only person responsible for what goes into my mouth is me," says the Australian prime minister, "and the only people who are responsible for what goes into kids' mouths are the parents." A health policy academic outlines the dire consequences of reliance on personal responsibility.
Source: The Australian, 10 Sep 2014

[Australia: Star nutrition ratings can produce healthier food choices](#)

A recent US study found purchases of less nutritious foods declined after the introduction of a nutrition rating system in a large US supermarket chain. Consumer group Choice compares the US system with Australia's and highlights the differences.
Source: Choice, Updated 2 Sep 2014

[Australia: Counter-advertising protects parents from junk food marketing](#)

Counter-advertising is a marketing tool which provides an opposing message to an advertisement or promotion. New research reveals that counter-advertising could help combat unhealthy food choices in the children's snack food aisle, but children need help to accurately interpret it.
Source: Cancer Council Victoria, 1 Sep 2014

[Australia: Convincing people that Coke is not part of the health "solution"](#)

What's wrong with Coca-Cola sponsoring cycling programmes with local authorities? Lots, according to public health experts. They say Coke emphasises the role energy imbalance plays in obesity - shifting the emphasis from their sugar-laden soft drinks to overall energy consumption and expenditure.
Source: Croakey, 22 Aug 2014

[Australia: A lesson for people – rats fed junk food ditch a balanced diet](#)

After a fortnight on a highly processed diet, rats lost motivation to do tasks and appeared unresponsive to normal sensory cues about what to eat.
[In: Frontiers in Psychology, 27 Aug 2014](#)
Source: The Conversation, 29 Aug 2014

[Big Food with a regional flavour: how Australia's food lobby works](#)

Academics from the University of Sydney argue that responding to the threat posed by the food industry to public health locally requires a clear understanding of food industry tactics in the context of Australia's political and lobbying culture.

Source: The Conversation, 11 Sep 2014

United Kingdom

[UK: Health leaders declare 'State of Emergency' on childhood obesity](#)

The Royal College of GPs and 11 partner organisations are calling for an emergency taskforce to be set up to tackle the rising epidemic of childhood obesity.

Source: Royal College of GPs, 31 Aug 2014

[UK: Coke performs U-turn and embraces traffic light labelling scheme](#)

Coca-Cola has announced it will adopt the Government's voluntary front of pack "traffic light" labelling scheme, reversing an earlier decision. FOE's comment: Since standard Coke gets 3 green lights and 1 red, and Diet Coke 4 green, this is not surprising. But then, the UK scheme was not designed for application to beverages.

Source: Marketing Week, 5 Sep 2014

[UK: Further evidence that obesity in middle age increases dementia risk](#)

Scientists have uncovered further evidence that being obese in middle age raises your risk of developing dementia later in life, with the latest study suggesting that people as young as 30 who are obese may be at greater risk.

[In:](#) Postgraduate Medical Journal, Online 20 Aug 2014

Source: The Independent, 21 Aug 2014

[UK: Taxation of high fat and sugar foods and drinks – literature update](#)

The UK Health Forum has published a literature update on the taxation of high fat and sugar foods and beverages and the impact of such taxes on obesity.

[In:](#) Taxation of Unhealthy Foods – Literature update, UK Health Forum, August 2014

Source: Obesity Learning Centre, 18 Aug 2014

United States

[US: Soda tax is 'the best option' for reducing teen obesity](#)

A new study assesses what the impact over 20 years would be for a tax or advertising ban on sugar-sweetened drinks, compared with other strategies to reduce obesity in adolescents such as exercise.

[In:](#) American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 26 Aug 2014

Source: Medical News Today, 30 Aug 2014

[US: Guiding Stars ratings of nutritional value of food influences food purchases](#)

A study found supermarket sales of less healthy foods – such as highly processed snack foods – fell by 8.31% when branded with a nutrition rating while the

percentage of healthy food purchases rose by 1.39%. (Guiding Stars has some similarities with our coming Health Star Rating System.)
Source: Science Daily, 19 Aug 2014

[US: High-action TV shows lead to more snacking: study](#)

With snacks freely available, young adults watching an action movie ate almost twice as much food as those watching an interview show, researchers found.

[In: JAMA Internal Medicine, Research Letter, 1 Sep 2014](#)

Source: Reuters, 1 Sep 2014

[US: The Food Gap Is Widening](#)

Nutritional disparities between America's rich and poor are growing, despite efforts to provide higher-quality food to people who most need it, according to a Harvard School of Public Health study that examined eating habits over the past decade.

[In: JAMA Internal Medicine, 1 Sep 2014](#)

Source: The Atlantic, 2 Sep 2014

[US: Effectiveness of health communication campaigns](#)

CDC research shows health communication campaigns can change health behaviours when combined with the distribution of free or reduced-price related products. An expert group has now published recommendations for these kinds of campaigns.

[In: American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Sep 2014 \(3 articles\)](#)

Source: The Community Guide, 15 Aug 2014

International

[Industry group calls for action to counter attacks on sugar](#)

The head of the International Sugar Organisation says an information campaign is needed to counter attacks on sugar. "We believe there is overwhelming sound scientific evidence that supports the nutritional value of sugar", he said.

Source: Wall Street Journal, 12 Sep 2014

[Obesity and NCDs high priority at Small Islands Developing States meeting](#)

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community has launched the Pacific NCD Partnership to push for a region-wide, collaborative approach to dealing with NCDs.

Source: RadioNZ, 2 Sep 2014

[India pressures Pepsi](#)

India has urged PepsiCo to reduce the sugar content in its carbonated beverages, making it the latest country to formally express concern about the impact of growing fizzy drink consumption on the health of its citizens.

Source: The Nation (Sri Lanka) 31 Aug 2014

[Ecuador to tax fast food in effort to halt soaring obesity rate](#)

Ecuador is set to become the latest Latin American nation to crack down on junk food after the President promised a new tax on fast food chains.

Source: The Independent, 11 Sep 2014

[South Africa: Food marketing proposals upset food manufacturers and advertisers](#)

South African food manufacturers are concerned about proposed new food labelling regulations to limit children's exposure to junk food marketing using ploys such as cartoon characters or toy giveaways. Advertising agencies fear the new restrictions will severely affect them as well.

Source: Media Online, 11 Sep 2014

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STOP OUR CHILDREN DEVELOPING TYPE 2 DIABETES

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