



Obesity News

Number 192, 28 October 2014

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

New Zealand

NZ Population Health Congress, Auckland, 6-8 October 2014

[NZ Population Health Congress declares commitment to action](#)

The three organisations co-hosting the first ever NZ Population Health Congress declared their commitment to work more closely together to address key issues in population health. Their three priorities are giving children of Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific nations the best start in life, improving health and reducing health inequities, and urgently addressing climate change and planetary health.

Source: Scoop, 8 Oct 2014

[Big Pharma TPPA rhetoric obscures industry self-interest](#)

Researchers analysed the language used in publicly available statements about the TPPA from the pharmaceutical industry's US and New Zealand peak bodies. It reveals that the rhetoric used is designed to mask the industry's own interests and engender sympathy and support, at the expense of public health.

Source: Scoop, 7 Oct 2014

[Junk food ads target kids' sports clubs](#)

Kids who join sports clubs are routinely bombarded with promotions for McDonald's, sugary drinks and other junk foods that are fuelling New Zealand's obesity epidemic.

Source: TV3, 7 Oct 2014

NZ – Sugary drinks

[Nelmac to shout water at events](#)

Free water will be on tap at community events in Nelson courtesy of a specially adapted water tanker. The tanker, which supplies drinking water in times of emergency, was adapted by Nelmac in support of Nelson City Council's ban on the sale of sugar sweetened drinks. Rob Beaglehole comments, "In terms of the obesity, tooth decay and type 2 diabetes epidemic unfolding before us, it's a great example of organisations working together to encourage the consumption of water."

Source: Nelson Mail, 13 Oct 2014

Support for fizzy drink ban

Northland hospitals won't be selling sugary drinks in their cafeterias or vending machines from 1 October.

Source: NZ herald, 25 Sep 2014

'Healthy' marketing for sports drinks opposed

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) is consulting on proposals that would allow electrolyte drinks to carry health claims about hydration and replenishment of electrolytes after exercise. Auckland Regional Public Health Service opposes this because the drinks contain as much sugar as fizzy drinks. "Liberalising the FSANZ standards so sports drinks can advertise a health claim poses a serious public health risk, given our rising obesity epidemic."

Source: NZ Herald, 1 Oct 2014

NZ – Food labelling

Weet-Bix first to use food star rating system

Sanitarum's Weet-Bix is marketed as a healthy food and now has five stars to prove it. The company says the star rating system will influence their recipes and some may be changed slightly for a better star rating.

Source: 3 News, 11 Oct 2014

Katherine Rich backs new health star rating system

Food industry lobbyist Katherine Rich approves the new health star rating system for packaged food. She says it's easy to understand, and it's an interpretive system. This is probably the first mention of Rich in Obesity News in which we agree with her.

Source: NZ Food and Grocery Council, 13 Oct 2014

Snack bars

When Consumer rated 35 snack bars using the new health star system, they found only 9 earned 3 stars or more. Professor Cliona Ni Mhurchu comments on these results. Consumer questions whether the star system will be used widely enough and says it will be monitoring the programme's implementation. If manufacturers don't take up the system then the government should make it mandatory.

Source: Consumer, Oct 2014

Earning gold stars – the introduction of the voluntary Health Star Rating Scheme

Bell Gully's Marija Batistich and Kristin Wilson summarise the new voluntary food labelling system.

Source: NZ Winegrower, Sep 2014, 994-95/Lexology, Sep 2014

Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement (TPPA)

The impact of the TPPA on health: Why a health impact assessment is crucial

This is a major, well-argued call by health professionals for a comprehensive and independent formal health impact assessment of the draft agreement to be performed by appropriately qualified and independent health experts prior to signing any agreement, the complete HIA to be made publicly available well in advance of any agreement being signed, and an unequivocal guarantee to be given that NZ's laws and policies will not be able to be challenged by other states or foreign investors under the ISDS process.

Source: NZ Doctor Undoctored, 28 Oct 2014

Health professionals call to give trade deal a health check

Health professionals say a comprehensive health impact assessment of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement must be carried out to protect the health of New Zealanders.

Source: Scoop, 28 Oct 2014

NZMA supports call for TPPA assessment

The New Zealand Medical Association supports the call by a number of other health sector organisations for an independent assessment of the impact of the proposed TPPA on our health system and our ability to achieve legitimate public policy objectives, such as the protection of public health, safety and the environment.

Source: Scoop, 28 Oct 2014

TPP a potential threat to continued alcohol reform

Alcohol Healthwatch is among a group of professional health agencies and individuals calling on Trade Minister Hon Tim Groser to arrange a comprehensive health impact assessment of the TPPA. They say "The TPP continues to be a risk factor for public health and must be put up for public scrutiny in this regard."

Source: Alcohol HealthWatch /Scoop, 28 Oct 2014

Action to protest TPPA on 8 November

On 8 November 2014, thousands of Kiwis will take part in the International Day of Action to protest the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA). The rally cry for us is TPPA – Corporate Trap, Kiwis Fight Back.

Source: Jane Kelsey, The Daily Blog, 20 Oct 2014

NZ – Other

Jonathan Coleman Minister of Health in Cabinet revamp

Dr Jonathan Coleman takes Tony Ryall's Health portfolio. The potential to tackle obesity through more active lifestyles was cited by Mr Key as his reason for also giving Dr Coleman the Sport and Recreation portfolio.

Source: NZ Herald, 7 Oct 2014

Obesity and diabetes in New Zealand

A Parliamentary Support research paper outlines the economic and health risks of obesity and diabetes, their prevalence, and examples of government initiatives to tackle them: more diabetes checks, green prescriptions, and healthy families NZ. Not mentioned are population-level initiatives including price incentives to encourage healthy eating, and restrictions on junk food advertising.

Source: NZ Parliament, 20 Oct 2014

Dirty Politics damages science

"When special interests try to undermine scientific advice by cherry picking evidence or smearing researchers, the scientific community faces a difficult choice. They can avoid the fray in an attempt to stay neutral, or fight back to correct the record.

Recently a group of public health researchers fought back, calling for food lobbyist Katherine Rich to resign from the board of the Health Promotion Agency, a government-funded sponsor of public health programmes.

Source: Stuff, 14 Oct 2014

Are school lunches harming our kids?

Nutritionist Bronwen King investigated the nutritional content of the most popular lunch options available in four Christchurch secondary schools. She found most contained high levels of saturated fat, sugar and sodium and were also seriously lacking in fibre and nutrients.

Source: Stuff, 20 Sep 2014

The dietary quality of the food environment surrounding schools

Using a sample of adolescents from schools in Otago, researchers investigated associations between food outlets around schools and dietary quality. They found a weak association.

In: Health and Place, Nov 2014, Online 18 Sep 2014

Who are the 'goodies' and 'badies' of the kid's food industry?

Nominations are now open for Munch's 2014 awards for good and bad practice in the children's food industry.

Source: Munch /Scoop, 6 Oct 2014

Australia

Australia – Food labelling

Australia: Will health stars cross out heart ticks?

If taken up by the majority of food producers, the government's new Health Star Rating system could make the Heart Foundation's Tick Program redundant by taking a leading role in helping consumers to make healthy food choices.

Source: Choice, 10 Oct 2014

Australia: Healthy food star rating system may edge out Heart Foundation's tick

The Heart Foundation's trademark health food label is under review 25 years after it was set up. It could become redundant if the review committee decides that the new health star rating system being rolled out by the Federal Government is sufficient.

Source: Herald Sun, 6 Oct 2014

Obesity group warns against easing restrictions for health claims on sports drinks

Food Standards Australia New Zealand is proposing to ease restrictions for health claims on sports drinks. Australia's Obesity Policy Coalition argues the changes could mislead the public into thinking these sugary drinks are healthy. And they could become a marketing ploy for Big Beverage.

Source: ABC net, 23 Sep 2014

Sports drinks have 'no proven benefits', promotion should be banned - experts

Sports drinks are useless for the majority of people and their use by celebrities simply misleads the public into thinking they work, experts have warned. Researchers, writing in the BMJ, said fans and spectators may be misled into thinking these products boost sporting prowess and are good for health.

In: British Medical Journal

Source: NZ Herald, 24 Sep 2014

Australia – Food marketing

Australia: Junk food, alcohol and gambling sponsors 'saturate' sport

Australian sport is rife with the promotion of alcohol, junk food and gambling, with nearly three quarters of sports sponsored by a company that sells those products, a study shows. Cricket topped the list with the unhealthy trinity of booze, betting and burgers comprising 27 per cent of its sponsors, including 19 fast food manufacturers, 10 alcohol companies and one gambling operator.

Source: SMH, 15 Oct 2014

Australia: Digital junk: food and beverage marketing on Facebook

Junk food manufacturers continue to aggressively market and sell vast amounts of energy-dense, nutrition-poor food and drinks and are increasingly targeting young people aged 15 – 24 years on Facebook, Australian research has found.

[In:](#) American Journal of Public Health, Online 16 Oct 2014

Source: The Conversation, 17 Oct 2014

Australia – Other

Australia: Big junk vs people power: how we can fix our collective weight problem

Jane Martin argues that education and campaigns imploring people to eat better and do more exercise are not enough, and that policy changes that will pull the levers to promote behaviour change at the population level are needed – now.

Source: The Conversation, 15 Oct 2014

Australia: How suburban commuters are coaxed into unhealthy eating

“This exploration of outdoor food advertising at Melbourne transit stops found 30% displayed food advertisements, with those in more disadvantaged suburbs more frequently promoting chain-brand fast food and less frequently promoting diet varieties of soft drinks. These findings may help raise awareness of unhealthy environmental exposures.”

[In:](#) Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, Oct 2014

Source: News.com, 13 Oct 2014

Australia: Low density dwellings bad for heart

People who live in low-density housing in Melbourne's outer suburbs are at risk of developing heart disease and becoming obese due to a lack of exercise, a study by the Heart Foundation has found.

Source: SMH, 28 Sep 2014

United Kingdom

UK: Why all new legislation should face an obesity test

“Obesity is not a future theoretical threat; it is a present catastrophe ... All government departments need to consider the impact of proposed policy on eating behaviours and public health, to ensure it does not compound the crisis. This is essential because the causes are so complex and multifaceted.”

Source: New Statesman, 16 Oct 2014

Government policies should pass an 'obesity test'

All new UK government policies should be considered in the context of rising obesity rates in an effort to reverse the trend, urges a report from think tank 2020Health.

Source: Food Navigator, 13 Oct 2014

Sugary sports drinks could be causing athletes to slow down, warn scientists

Drinking sugary sports drinks and following a high carbohydrate diet has left many elite athletes with dental health so bad it affects their performance.

Source: Daily Mail, 13 Oct 2014

UK: Sugar intake must be slashed further, say scientists

The target to reduce sugar consumption should be much more ambitious, health experts say. New advice is that it should account for 5% of energy intake - down from 10%. But a study published in the BMC Public Health journal suggested the target should be no more than 3%.

[In:](#) BMC Public Health, online 16 Sep 2014

Source: BBC News, 16 Sep 2014

Italy wins ruling on 'simplistic' UK traffic light health warnings

Italy has claimed victory in the first round of its battle against Britain's system of food labelling, which the Italians claim discriminates against some of their most prized delicacies such as salami. The European Commission has ruled that the traffic

light system is overly "simplistic" and the EU has sent a "letter of formal notice" to London, giving the UK two months to respond to Italy's complaints.
Source: The Telegraph, 2 Oct 2014

United States

US: Sugar and Sugary drinks

US: Berkeley and San Francisco Take their Shot at Soda Taxes

Voters in San Francisco and Berkeley will decide shortly whether to put a tax on sodas and other sugary drinks to reduce ailments including obesity and diabetes.
Source: Bloomberg, 28 Oct 2014

US: Michael Bloomberg funds campaign to impose fizzy drink tax in California

Michael Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York, is taking his war against fizzy drinks to California by funding a campaign to impose a tax on sugary beverages.
Source: The Telegraph, 20 Oct 2014

US: Big Soda 'freaking out' about sugary beverages tax in Berkeley

The soda fight is, if nothing else, a case study in whether truckloads of cash can sway a politically engaged citizenry. The anti-tax efforts include canvassers, subway ads, mass mailings, print ads, posters on bus stops and TV commercials. A photo journalist shows some of the anti-tax advertising around Berkeley.
Source: Mother Jones, 20 Oct 2014

US: Soda industry spends \$7.7 million to defeat San Francisco sugar tax — so far

The American Beverage Industry has spent \$7.7 million — the second-highest amount ever spent to defeat a San Francisco ballot proposition — on its effort to try to prevent the city from becoming the first in the country to tax sugary drinks.
Source: SF Gate, 9 Oct 2014

US: Big Soda's Deceptions Keep on Coming

Outlines some of Big Soda's deceptive practices, such as setting up "citizens groups".
Source: Beyond Chron, 7 Oct 2014

US: How the soda industry celebrated childhood obesity awareness month

An opinion writer isn't impressed by the American Beverage Association spin machine, as it responds to increasing calls to tax sugary beverages.
Source: Scientific American, 30 Sep 2014

US: The soda industry's promises mean nothing

"The real news: soda companies are at last admitting their role in obesity," writes nutritionist Marion Nestle, commenting on a pledge by Big Beverage to reduce calories. "And agreeing to decrease soda consumption by 20 percent is easy to do when demand is already falling rapidly ... If the soda industry really wants to help prevent obesity, it needs to change its current practices."

Source: Time, editorial, 30 Sep 2014

[California Governor Signs Healthy Vending Legislation](#)

California's Governor has signed legislation mandating that healthy food and drink options are offered in all vending machines located on California state property.

Source: Public Health Advocacy, 25 Sep 2014

US – Other

[US: Who's your nanny?](#)

Big food companies attack public health advocates calling them "food nannies". But who is the real nanny? Groups that want to make healthy choices easier for parents? Or the food industry that spends billions of dollars telling kids what to eat and drink? The food industry opposes healthy food policies because it wants to keep its job as the nation's "food nanny". Check this infographic to see how they do it.

Source: Center for Science in the Public Interest website

[McDonalds and Coca-Cola suffer as Americans lose taste for junk food](#)

America may be the spiritual home of junk food, but profits at McDonalds and Coca-Cola are plunging amid signs that younger US customers want healthier fare.

Source: The Telegraph, 21 Oct 2014

[US - Obesity rates have stabilized, but waistlines are still growing](#)

American waistlines are still expanding, according to a new analysis from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The average waist circumference of U.S. adults has increased by about 3% since the end of the last century. The trend applies to pretty much all demographic groups.

[In:](#) JAMA letter, 17 Sep 2014

Source: LA Times, 16 Sep 2014

International

[Evidence shows we can prevent obesity in children](#)

Researchers have demonstrated that childhood obesity prevention programmes have a positive health impact on body mass index - a measure of body fat based upon height and weight. The author of a 2011 systematic review on childhood obesity prevention received an award recently. The promising policies and practices she identified are summarised here.

[In:](#) Cochrane Summaries, 7 Dec 2011

Source: Citizen News Service, Oct 2014

[Protecting children from the harmful effects of food and drink marketing](#)

WHO has recommended that governments play a leading role in reducing children's overall exposure to food marketing and setting rules on the persuasive techniques companies can use, with a view to protecting children from the adverse impacts of marketing.

Source: World Health Organization, 18 Sep 2014

Sweden: The economics of obesity: one big problem

Research into links between income and obesity reinforces the importance of policy combating early-life obesity in order to reduce healthcare expenditures as well as poverty and inequalities later in life.

[In:](#) Demography, 9 Sep 2014

Source: The Economist, Oct 2014

Mexicans cut down on consumption of sugary drinks, survey shows

Some 52 percent of Mexicans have reduced their consumption of sugary drinks in 2014 in the wake of the imposition of a new tax on soft drinks, the National Obesity Survey found.

Source: La Prensa, 14 Oct 2014

Mexico's junk food taxes hitting Pepsi, Coke

PepsiCo reported a higher quarterly profit recently as global sales rose, but one weak spot was Mexico. The company said snacks sales volume declined 3 percent, hurt by a new tax on junk foods. Coca-Cola has also reported beverage volume declines in Mexico for the first half of the year, citing a similar tax on drinks.

Source: NZ Herald / AP, 10 Oct 2014

Compiled by

Robin White
Fight the Obesity Epidemic (FOE)
PO Box 29-016
Ngaio, Wellington,
New Zealand

[Email us](mailto:action@foe.org.nz) – action [at] foe.org.nz

[FOE on Facebook](#) – join in the discussions

[FOE's website](#) has news about obesity and in depth coverage of some issues.

[Back Issues of Obesity News](#) are on our website

FOE's Robyn Toomath is active on Twitter.



STOP OUR CHILDREN DEVELOPING TYPE 2 DIABETES

FOE New Zealand Trust • PO Box 29-016, Ngaio, Wellington 6443 • action@foe.org.nz • www.foe.org.nz