

PORTUGUESE TAX ON SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES: CHILDREN'S CONSUMPTION TRENDS (COSI PORTUGAL 2019–2022) AND SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

Marta Gaspar¹; Ana Rito^{1,2}

¹ Centre for Studies and Research in Social Dynamics and Health, Avenida Padre Cruz, 1649-016 Lisbon, Portugal

² WHO Collaborating Centre for Nutrition and Childhood Obesity, National Institute of Health Doutor Ricardo Jorge, 1649-016 Lisbon, Portugal

INTRODUCTION



The consumption of sugar, particularly through **sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs)**, is directly related to **childhood obesity**¹



The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies **fiscal policies**, such as increasing the price of SSBs, as a **cost-effective** approach to tackle childhood obesity¹

Tax on SSBs and beverages with added sweeteners

Law nº42/2016 → Law nº71/2018

- Reformulation of the sugar content²
- Reduction in annual consumption of SSBs²
- Decrease in sugar intake from these beverages²



Marketing and advertisement remain as key drivers of children's food choices, with SSBs heavily promoted on digital platforms³ → Law nº30/2019

AIMS

To analyze trends in children **SSBs consumption**, before and after the revised tax implementation, and characterize SSB-related **social media content** from the most advertised brands to children

METHODS

CHILDREN'S CONSUMPTION



SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

Children's consumption of SSBs

Data from **COSI Portugal 2018/2019 and 2021/2022** (repeated cross-sectional design) were analyzed.

Nationally representative samples of **6–8-year-old children** completed a **family questionnaire**, reporting **SSBs consumption frequency**



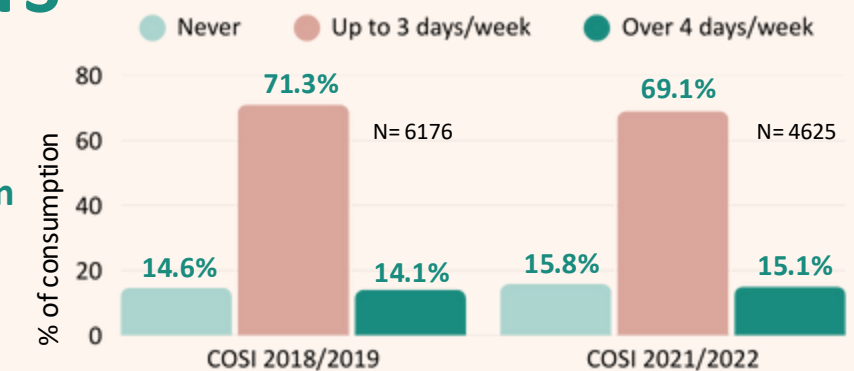
Social media content related to SSBs

- 1 Identification of the **21** most frequently advertised **food and beverage brands** to children aged **3 to 16 years**
- 2 Analysis of **Instagram** Posts (2022)
- 3 Analysis of the **SSBs presence** and compliance with the **Portuguese Nutrient Profile Model (PT-NPM)**



RESULTS

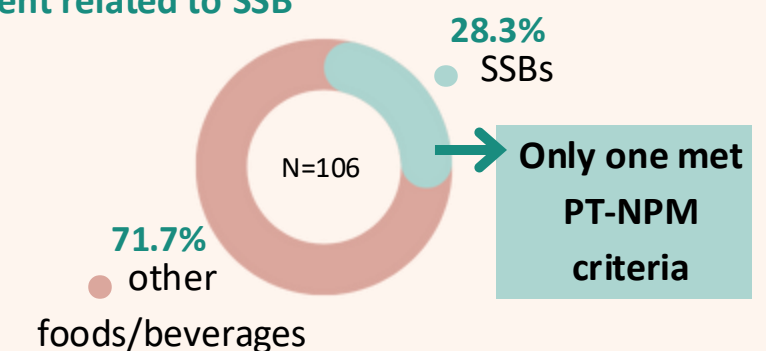
Children's consumption of SSBs



Social media content related to SSB

337 Instagram posts

↓
106 containing foods/beverages



CONCLUSIONS

- **SSBs tax** implementation contributed to a **reduction** in consumption, although **intake** remains high in children
- SSBs continue to be **marketed on digital platforms** by brands exposed to children

NEED FOR MORE COMPREHENSIVE POLICY ACTION, INCLUDING STRONGER MARKETING REGULATIONS, TO PROTECT CHILDREN

REFERENCES

- 1- World Health Organization (2022) WHO manual on sugar-sweetened beverage taxation policies to promote healthy diets. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240056299>
- 2- Directorate-General of Health, Portugal (2019) Final report – Implementation of the sugar-sweetened beverages tax (IABA) in Portugal. Available at: <https://alimentacaosadavel.dgs.pt/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Relatorio-final-IABA.pdf>
- 3- World Health Organization (2023) Policies to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing: WHO guideline. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240079298>