Reviewer’s report

Title: Consumption of sweetened-beverages and poverty in Colombia: when access is not an advantage

Version: 0 Date: 06 Nov 2017

Reviewer: Elizabeth Beardsmore

Reviewer's report:

My comments are minor and as follows;
This study is useful as evidence of the impact of taxation of sugar sweetened beverages on health inequalities is still a developing area of discussion and analysis. This ecological study explores SSB consumption across sociodemographic and geodemographic spectrums.

Page 2, line 53 - "..transitions responsible for this increase have not yet ended" could use "…nutritional influences (or nutritional transitions) relating to health are still ongoing"

Page 2, Lines 53 onwards - this is a long sentence and should be restructured (consider grammar).

Page 3, Line 8 - "there are debates for and against this type of measure" could say "there are ongoing debates surrounding taxation"

Page 3, Line 33 - when discussing the hypothesis, would it be appropriate to add to the end of this " and this should be reflected in the consumption of SSB" ? if that is indeed what I have interpreted from reading this paper? The hypothesis as is reads somewhat unfinished at this stage. when re - visiting this later in the paper you present more detail, should this be included/presented earlier (at this stage of the paper)

Methods

A little more detail relating to how SSB consumption was estimated from the survey would be useful.

In addition, more general details relating to the survey would be useful to establish validity or some mention relating to how established the tool is for a reader who might be unfamiliar with the National Nutritional Survey.

Page 4, line 47 "In addition, the complex design of the sample was incorporated" - I am not entirely sure what this means, some clarification or development in context would improve this
More details relating to the interviews based on the food frequency questionnaire would strengthen the methodological approach section and give a more in depth insight into the reliability of the methodological approach used (Page 4, line 49 onwards)

Results

The section on rank based inequality page 6, line 12 onwards could be re structured for clarity.

Gini coefficient on page 6 could be briefly contextualised with economic theory for a more in depth understanding of the findings in this section

Page 6, line 35 "regarding average frequencies" could be "Average frequencies fluctuate .."

Page 7, line 8 - line 12; this sentence does not read clearly and should be restructured.

Discussion

In the discussion there is mention of how SSBs are classified, as snack foods. This section would benefit from a little more depth in relation to this as there are implications for both the methodological approach and also the wider context. There is no clear distinction or mention relating to this study, are they classified this way at a national level or in the nutritional food survey? If it is in the survey, should this then be mentioned in the methods section under how SSB consumption was calculated? There is also the issue that SSB taxation policy is generally driven by evidence that suggests that it is "hidden" calories in beverages that let additional sugars in the diet go unnoticed. Some literature suggests a clear distinction between added sugars in drinks and added sugars in snacks, should be clear. There is also literature relating to the impact this has on populations and policy - should some of this be addressed in the discussion?

The discussion also makes mention of brands and the relationship to price, it might also be interesting to consider brand loyalty and if this might have any impact on the findings or in the context of the wider literature and evidence base.

I agree with the recommendations for more accurate methodological approaches to gain relevant insight, should the classification of SSBs be mentioned in this section also.

Overall, this paper is useful in its contribution to the economic impact and wider discussions relating to policy, inequality and can contribute knowledge to the discussion relating to the impact of taxation of SSBs. I also found the findings interesting and your conclusion makes clear the areas for further work and the impacts for policy and practice.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?  
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?  
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?  
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Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?  
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I am able to assess the statistics

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