

Assessing the consumption of foods containing sugar among young people

Irina CIOBANU 

Nicolae Testemitanu State University of Medicine and
Pharmacy, Chisinau, the Republic of Moldova

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Introduction

In the last fifty years, sugar consumption has tripled worldwide. More than 500 calories a day are consumed by young people. This high calorie consumption is the result of using sugary foods and drinks processed with caloric sweeteners, especially table sugar. However, most of the reported data indicate that sugar intake is higher than the level recommended. The prevalence of obesity in children and adolescents has increased year on year in countries around the world, and the burden of various chronic diseases become a serious public health problem. Over 380 million children and adolescents worldwide suffer from obesity and related chronic diseases.

Material and methods

The research project was conducted in the Department of Preventive Medicine, Discipline of Hygiene of USMF "Nicolae Testemitanu" in the period 2024-2025. In accordance with the proposed aim and objectives, a descriptive study was conducted on a group of 202 young people who answered a set of questions regarding the consumption of products containing sugar.

Results

Consumption of added sugars is implicated in increased risk of a

variety of diseases including obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, as well as some cancers. According to statistical data, sugar imports into the Republic of Moldova substantially exceed exports of this food product, which demonstrates high consumption at national level. The survey data shows that although 90.6% of respondents are aware that excessive sugar consumption has a negative impact on health – white bread, chocolate and peanut paste, sugar products commercially canned foods, sweetened drinks and processed meats are among the favorite products among young people. Intake of these foods essentially reduces the consumption of products recommended by the World Health Organization such as quality proteins (meat, fish), fruit, vegetables and wholegrain cereals. Compared to other countries, domestic food products are higher in sugar. Chocolate and biscuits contain the most sugar (60 g and 20,7 g respectively per 100 g of preparation). Of dairy products – yoghurt (11.8 g) and beverages – Coca-Cola and Fanta (10.5 g per 100 ml).

Conclusions

In the context of reducing sugar intake, at national level, in addition to the educational measures carried out to raise awareness of the impact of sugar on the health of the population, drastic policies are also needed to reduce marketing campaigns as well as taxing food products not recommended for daily consumption. Education and healthy eating and limiting sugar consumption have a positive impact on the health of family members. Providing more educational opportunities for young people is one of the most effective public investments in health and society.

Corresponding author:

Ciobanu Irina,

e-mail: irenciobanu@icloud.com