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freedom of speech and so do those that disagree with him. The NHS is planning to introduce its own sugar tax in hospitals and health centres in England to help tackle the growing problem of obesity. Hospitals will start charging more for sugary drinks and snacks sold in their cafes and vending machines. With me now in the studio is Kawther Hashem, a nutritionist and researcher from the campaign group Action On Sugar. I think it is a great idea. How can hospitals give easy access to these products? It is outrageous that they are priced similar to water. Water should be more readily available and accessible to everyone in the hospital and not priced similarly to sugary drinks. It seems amazing that they have not done it before. Exactly. How bad is the obesity

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problem and how much do sugary drinks and snacks contribute, which are sold in hospital vending machines? 60% of the UK population is overweight or obese and type 2 diabetes costs the NHS staggering amounts and could potentially bankrupt the NHS. Sugary drinks contribute to the risk of getting type 2 diabetes. It is very easy to drink these drinks and get a whole meal, but he would not be able to eat as many oranges, or actual food with that sugar content, so it does not give you that filling effect of other foods. Reducing people, their consumption, is doable. It is calories that we can take in very easily and it contributes to the overweight and obesity crisis. Maybe hospitals should not sell sugary drink that all. That is my opinion.

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We are in a situation where the NHS feels that it has to raise revenue. The reason why they have access to these products and they sell them is because it raises some revenue for hospitals. It could potentially produce more revenue if they can tax it, but that is not an idea we want to go behind. We want to discourage people from drinking too much of these products. There is evidence of a link between increasing the price and a drop in consumption. Absolutely. We have seen it in Mexico. We have seen it on a small scale modelling studies and it will have an effect of discouraging people. If there is a wide price differentiation between water and those types of drinks or even confectionery and better options like the banana, they will go for the option that is healthier perhaps. Some people find it really

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annoying that they are forced to pay more for something that they choose to pay for and eat. It is up to them. They know it has got sugar in it and they still make that choice to buy it. That is fair enough but in a hospital environment we need to think twice. Why are people in hospital and what are they eating and drinking that contributes to the bad health? We know that our diets are contributing more to bad health than alcohol and smoking so we have to consider the effects of that on our health and reduce how much we are having. The boss of the NHS has suggested to the Guardian that this is what is going to happen to hospitals and health centres in England. Where does this leave the Government? We are expecting a big report from them soon, any moment now, and they are apparently going to make a decision on whether to introduce a sugar tax across the board. Where do you think that leaves the Government now? I think it will put them in a situation where it will be difficult for them to not seriously consider a sugary drinks tax. Some local authorities