**BBC online**

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**Bangor University study targets sugary drinks 'cycle'**

Too many sugary drinks can dull taste and lead to a "vicious circle" of consuming more of them, according to a Bangor University study.

Researchers say the UK government should consider taxing sugar added to foodstuffs.

They claim overweight people have a dulled sensitivity to soft drinks but enhanced subconscious liking for sweet things.

The Soft Drinks Association said too much of anything is not a good idea.

Dr Hans-Peter Kubis, who led the research team, said it has "serious implications" for health.

He says a failure to address the problem could lead to rising obesity levels and more type 2 diabetes.

The researchers say if children are thirsty they should drink water as even squash and natural fruit juice are high in sugar.

Researchers, who undertook trials with people of different weight, say their work shows, for the first time, that overweight and obese people have a dulled sensitivity to soft drinks.

But they also develop enhanced subconscious liking of sweet tastes.

Even for those who are not overweight, drinking two sugary drinks a day for four weeks is sufficient to dull people's sensitivity to the taste sensation.

This reduces the enjoyment of the taste, but increases the person's preference for it.

As the sweet 'treat' becomes less rewarding, the tendency is then to look for more sweet food, or drink, and a "vicious circle" of eating sweet and calorie laden food is established.

The sweet drinks not only include soft drinks however, as levels of sugar found in fruit cordial or 'squash' and natural fruit juice as well as carbonated drinks are all "too high in sugar and too sweet," says the Bangor study.

"This has serious implications for public health," said Dr Hans-Peter Kubis, from Bangor University's school of sport, health and exercise sciences.

"This research shows how little food stuff are required to actually change your taste perceptions, and how powerful sweet tasting products are," he added.

Dr Kubis said sugar was more freely available today than in previous diets.

"We are headed for a multi-level health disaster with rising obesity levels and the increasing incidence of type 2 diabetes," he said.

"From our research it's clear to see how this situation may have created a cycle of sweet food and drink consumption.

"As taste satisfaction levels drop; the more sweet foods are consumed, contributing to these problems," he added.

Dr Kubis said the problem needs to be addressed at a national level.

"My reaction would be to encourage the government to consider taxing sugar that is added to foodstuffs - and have that tax ring fenced for the health budget," he said.

"I'd also question the wisdom of including fruit juice in the five-a-day message," he added.

Fruit juice is higher in sugars than people realise, he added.

The results were based on experiments carried out at Bangor, in collaboration with Bristol Medical School.

A spokesman for the British Soft Drinks Association said soft drinks, like all food and drink, should be consumed as part of a balanced diet.

"As everybody knows, too much of anything is not a good idea," he said.

It would be much better to provide the right information to "enable people to make informed choices, than to impose new regulations and taxes," he added.

**Daily Mail:**

**Fruit juice should not be included in 'five-a-day' healthy portions as it contains too much sugar, researchers claim**

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Fruit juice has too much sugar and should not be one of our 'five-a-day' health foods, according to research.

Academics at Bangor University in North Wales say their study has shown for the first time that overweight and obese people have a 'dulled' sensitivity to the drinks, but enhanced 'subconscious liking' of the sweet taste.

Hans-Peter Kubis, of the university's School of Sport, Health & Exercise Sciences, has called for sugar to be taxed to stop an impending health 'disaster', and for fruit juice to be taken out of the 'five-a-day' health message.

He said: 'This has serious implications for public health. This research shows how little sweet food stuffs are required to actually change your taste perceptions and how powerful sweet tasting products are.

'We are headed for a multi-level health disaster with rising obesity levels and the increasing incidence of type 2 diabetes.

'From our research it's clear to see how this situation may have created a cycle of sweet food and drink consumption. As taste satisfaction levels drop, the more sweet foods are consumed, contributing to these problems.'

Researchers are encouraging parents to give their children water instead of 'healthy' fruit drinks.

Natural fruit juice, as well as carbonated drinks and cordials, are all 'too high in sugar and too sweet', according to the findings.

Dr Kubis said: 'My reaction would be to encourage the Government to consider taxing sugar that is added to food stuffs - and have that tax ring-fenced for the health budget.

'I'd also question the wisdom of including fruit juice in the five-a-day message. Fruit juice is higher in sugars than people realise.'

In the trial, lean and obese people were asked to rate their perception of and enjoyment of sweet and salty tastes.

The initial trial showed that overweight and obese participants rated drinks as being less sweet than the lean participants.

In further experiments the subconscious preference for sweet food underwent a computer-based test finding that overweight and obese participants had a stronger preference for sweet. The conclusion was that overweight and obese participants had a 'reduced sensitivity' to sweetness but an 'enhanced subconscious preference' for sweet food.

To test whether sweet food consumption may be responsible for these findings and to see if it was possible to recreate the taste perception of obese people in those of a 'normal' weight, people who did not usually consume sugary drinks were recruited for a second experiment.

Researchers found that in as little as four weeks it was possible to replicate the dulling of the 'sweetness' of sugary drinks and lessen the enjoyment, just by repeated consumption.

Twelve people who did not usually drink sweet drinks and were lean were recruited for the sugary drink study.

The taste perception study involved 33 people - 22 'normal' and 11 overweight or obese people.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2001473/Fruit-juice-included-day-healthy-portions-contains-sugar-researchers-claim.html#ixzz25ap8yy28>

**The Express**

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HIDDEN DANGER IN FRUIT JUICES  
  
**BYLINE:** By Jo Willey Health Correspondent

MILLIONS of people are putting their health at risk after research showed that natural fruit juice is so packed with sugar it can be addictive.

Drinking just two glasses a day could give people a "sweet tooth", making them crave calorie-packed food, a study claimed yesterday. Experts are so concerned they are even calling for juice drinks to be taxed in a bid to curb Britain's growing obesity epidemic.

Dr Hans-Peter Kubis, who led the study, said: "This has serious implications for public health. The research shows how few sweet foodstuffs are required to actually change your **taste** perceptions and how powerful sweettasting products are.

"We are heading for a multi-level health disaster with rising obesity levels and the increasing incidence of type 2 diabetes."

Pure fruit juice, as well as carbonated drinks and cordials, are all "too high in sugar and too sweet", the study found.

The market for fruit juice and juice drinks was valued at a massive GBP 3.1billion in 2009.

Figures show that Britons work their way through more than two billion litres of fruit juice each year, the equivalent of 36 litres for every man, woman and child.

Drinking natural fruit juice is widely regarded as a healthy way to start the day, with many enjoying a glass as part of their recommended five-a-day intake of fruit and vegetables.

But that view is now being disputed after previous research showed that just one glass of orange juice a day increases the risk of type 2 diabetes linked to poor diet by up to a quarter. It is thought the lack of fibre in juices may cause dangerous spikes in blood sugar levels.

The latest study showed that overweight people who drink **sugary** **drinks** are left with a "dulled" sensitivity to them and their sweet **taste**. This then leads to an enhanced "subconscious liking" for the sweetness, making them prefer and even crave high-calorie and sugar-laden foods.

A vicious cycle is then created as they become more dependent on the sugar rush and desperate for their next "treat".

Researchers say it is the first time such a link has been established.

And it is not just the overweight who are susceptible. The study found that people who are slim and active also risk developing a sweet tooth after having just two **sugary** **drinks** every day for a month.

Low or zero-calorie drinks with artificial sweeteners do not solve the problem as they only encourage people to over-eat at the next opportunity to make up for the calories missing in the beverage.

Dr Kubis, from the University of Bangor's school of sport, health and exercise sciences, said: "I would encourage the Government to consider taxing sugar that is added to foodstuffs and have that tax ring-fenced for the health budget.

"I'd also question the wisdom of including fruit juice in the five-a-day message."

The research was carried out at Bangor in collaboration with Bristol University's school of physiology and pharmacology.

In the study's first phase, overweight participants were found to rate **sugary** **drinks** as being less sweet than slimmer adults as well as having a stronger subconscious preference for sweet food. In the second phase, lean people who did not usually drink sweet drinks drank two sugary beverages every day for four weeks.

The results showed their enjoyment and sensitivity of sweet **taste** became dulled after consuming the drinks, mimickin g findings shown in the obese participants.

But Richard Laming, of the British Soft Drinks Association, slammed the research.

He said: "It is wrong to draw sweeping conclusions from this experiment that involved only 12 subjects, with no control group, consuming an artificially unbalanced diet.

"The experience of millions of people every day, that soft drinks can be consumed as part of a balanced diet, still stands.

"Fruit juice contains only the sugar that was in the original fruit. A glass of fruit juice can count as one of their five-a-day and there is no reason to change this."

**The Guardian (London) - Final Edition**

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**Sugary drinks** dull **taste** buds, study claims  
  
**BYLINE:** Steven Morris

Consuming just two **sugary** **drinks** a day can dull the **taste** buds and lead to cravings for high-calorie food, a study claims.

The research suggests that within a month those who drink sugary beverages are left with a dulled sensitivity to sweet **tastes**. This leads to an increased preference for high-calorie and sugar-laden foods, creating a "vicious cycle" as consumers look for their next treat.

Those who do not have a sweet tooth are particularly at risk of developing one after drinking sugary beverages, even if they are slim and active.

Experts who carried out the research at the universities of Bristol and Bangor expressed surprise at how quickly **tastes** could be dulled by exposure to sweet drinks. Lucy Donaldson, of the University of Bristol, said: "We have known for some time that the way we perceive different **tastes** can change under different circumstances. Finding that two sweet drinks a day over a short time can dramatically change **taste** was a real surprise."

In the trial lean and obese people rated their perception and enjoyment of sweet and salty **tastes**. The obese participants tended to rate identical drinks as less sweet than the lean ones did.

The experts then recruited only lean people who did not usually consume **sugary** **drinks**. Their sensitivity to sweet drinks was tested and they were asked to consume a **sugary** **drink** twice a day. A month later, when they were re-tested, their sensitivity to sweet **tastes** and conscious enjoyment of them had dulled.

Dr Hans-Peter Kubis, of the University of Bangor, said the dulling of tastebuds can lead to a "vicious cycle" as consumers of **sugary** **drinks** tend to more sweet food to compensate.