



## City Research Online

### City, University of London Institutional Repository

---

**Citation:** Bonifant Cisneros, A., Headings, R., Wells, R., Reynolds, C., Vogel, C. & Breeze, P. (2023). Understanding the use of media analysis in public health research through food tax debates (HEALTHEI Project): a scoping review. UK Public Health Science Conference 24th November 2023. Paper presented at the UK Public Health Science Conference, 24 Nov 2023, London, UK.

This is the accepted version of the paper.

This version of the publication may differ from the final published version.

---

**Permanent repository link:** <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/31567/>

**Link to published version:**

**Copyright:** City Research Online aims to make research outputs of City, University of London available to a wider audience. Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the author(s) and/or copyright holders. URLs from City Research Online may be freely distributed and linked to.

**Reuse:** Copies of full items can be used for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge. Provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

---

City Research Online:

<http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/>

[publications@city.ac.uk](mailto:publications@city.ac.uk)

---

## **Understanding the use of media analysis in public health research through food tax debates (HEALTHEI Project): a scoping review**

*Anette Bonifant Cisneros\**, *Rachel Headings\**, *Rebecca Wells\**, *Christian Reynolds*, *Christina Vogel*, *Penny Breeze*

\*Co-lead authors

**Centre for Food Policy, City, University of London, London, UK** (A Bonifant Cisneros PhD, R Headings MSc, R Wells PhD, C Reynolds PhD, C Vogel PhD); **MRC Lifecourse Epidemiology Centre, University of Southampton, Southampton, UK** (C Vogel); **Health Economics and Decision Science, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK** (P Breeze PhD)

Correspondence to:

Rachel Headings, Centre for Food Policy, City, University of London, London EC1V 0HB, UK

**rachel.headings.2@city.ac.uk**

### **Abstract**

**Background:** Poor diet is a major public health concern. In 2021, 63·8% of adults and 22·2% of reception-age children were either overweight or obese in England. Fiscal interventions have become a popular policy measure to reduce obesity and encourage healthy eating. Such measures are highly controversial, leading to media debate promoting pro-tax and anti-tax arguments. To better understand food tax debates and the use of media analysis in public health research, we conducted a scoping review of media analyses using food taxes as a case study.

**Methods:** In this scoping review, we searched SCOPUS, PubMed and EBSCOhost databases on Feb 14–22, 2023, using keyword variations for “food”, “tax” and “media analysis”. Results were restricted to English-only, peer-reviewed journal articles. The initial results were manually screened through an iterative process to exclude articles that did not analyse a food tax, were non-English language, were not peer-reviewed and/or did not use media analysis as the primary method. Modelled on Arksey and O’Malley’s (2005) five-stage review protocol, two researchers used a coding framework to independently code all articles and checked result quality through regular discussion. Extracted data included article title, author, year, country, tax type, media sources used, identified media frames, and research aims, methods, results, and conclusions. Results are reported according to PRISMA guidelines and data files submitted to FigShare Repository (non-accessible).

**Findings:** Of 1087 articles reviewed, 19 were eligible to be included in the study. Articles were published between 2013 and 2023, with 2021 having the highest concentration of studies carried out mainly in the UK and USA. Despite search terms encompassing a range of food products, the retrieved media analyses focused on three types of food product taxes: sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB), meat, and groceries. Most articles explored arguments for and against policy implementation, with some investigating stakeholder representation. Results demonstrate that stakeholders’ arguments, both positive and negative, are consistent across countries and food products.

**Interpretation:** The consistency of how both pro-tax and anti-tax arguments are presented in the media demonstrates the importance of coordination between stakeholder groups to influence policy adoption. To our knowledge, this is the first study to investigate media analysis across a diverse range of food products.

**Funding:** National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)

**Contributors**

ABC and RH were equally responsible for paper conceptualisation, data curation, methodology, investigation, formal analysis, draft writing, and editing and project administration with detailed feedback from RW. RW, CR, and PB were responsible for funding acquisition, project conceptualisation, writing review and editing, validation and providing feedback on conceptualisation, formal analysis, and methodology. RW and CR provided direct supervision with input from PB. CV provided feedback as internal reviewer. ABC, RH, and RW are co-lead authors, with RH as the corresponding and presenting author.

**Declaration of interests**

CV has a non-financial research collaboration with a national UK supermarket chain. All authors declare no competing interests.

**Acknowledgments**

This scoping study is part of the HEALTHEI project funded by NIHR, grant number 133927.