Sugar Industry Criminally Tried to Bias Heart Research, Study Says

By Ashley P. Taylor, Med Expose’ | September, 2016

The sugar industry may have attempted to bias heart disease research in self-serving ways, downplaying studies that implicated sugar consumption in heart disease, and instead placing the blame on fats, a new study said.

In the study, researchers looked at correspondence that happened between the leaders of a sugar trade organization and heart disease researchers. The investigators also looked at internal sugar-industry documents and other materials. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ah88gjejCTU]

The study focused on the circumstances surrounding the publication of a 1967 review article about the influences of dietary sugar and fat on coronary heart disease (CHD), which is caused by the narrowing of the arteries supplying blood to the heart.

That influential article "singled out fat and cholesterol as the dietary causes of CHD and downplayed evidence that sucrose consumption was also a risk factor," the researchers at the University of California, San Francisco, wrote in the new study, which appears today (Sept. 12) in the journal JAMA Internal Medicine.

But in the new study, the researchers "have produced compelling evidence that a sugar trade association not only paid for but also initiated and influenced research expressly to exonerate sugar as a major risk factor for coronary heart disease (CHD)," New York University nutrition and public health professor Marion Nestle wrote in an editorial accompanying the new findings in the journal. [10 Amazing Facts About Your Heart]
The Sugar Association, the trade organization in question, did not respond to requests for comment from Live Science. The Sugar Association evolved from the Sugar Research Foundation (SRF), which was the trade organization involved in the correspondences from the 1960s that were detailed in the new study, the study authors said.

**Two theories of heart disease**
In the 1950s, there were two competing ideas about which dietary factors increased people's risk of coronary heart disease: Some researchers suggested that fat and cholesterol led to CHD, but others, particularly British physiologist John Yudkin, blamed sugar, the new study said.

In 1964, John Hickson, who was then the vice president and director of research for the SRF, mentioned Yudkin's research in an internal memo. Hickson recommended that the trade organization fund CHD research. "Then we can publish the data and refute our detractors," Hickson wrote in the memo, the authors of the new study said.

In 1965, the trade organization paid two Harvard researchers to conduct a literature review focusing on papers that had claimed that sucrose and fructose have "some special metabolic peril," the new study said.

"This is a very common practice in industry-funded research. Instead of actually producing new research, they will pay scientists to review the existing literature and come out with the kinds of conclusions they want," Laura Schmidt, a professor of health policy at UCSF and an author of the new study, told Live Science. [Special Report: The Science of Weight Loss]

In the two-part review, which was published in 1967 in the New England Journal of Medicine (part one, published July 27; part two, published Aug. 3), the researchers looked at whether a high-sucrose diet could lead to CHD. They also looked at which interventions would be more effective in preventing CHD: modifying sucrose or modifying saturated fat levels in the diet, the authors wrote.

The review concluded that the only dietary changes needed to prevent CHD were cholesterol reductions and the substitution of polyunsaturated for saturated fats, the authors of the new study wrote.

But that review used different standards to evaluate studies on sugar than those used to evaluate the studies on fat, biasing the findings in favor of sugar, Schmidt told Live Science. Further, though other funding sources were mentioned in the paper, the funding from the sugar industry was not disclosed, the authors of the new study wrote.

"We can only imagine that they didn't [disclose sugar industry funding] because it was a biased review and they didn't want anybody to know why," Schmidt said.
But the researchers of the new study said that the bias they found in that 1967 review "demonstrates that the sugar industry was … trying to push the scientific debate in directions that would deflect attention from the role of sugar in heart disease," Schmidt said.

[Why Is Too Much Sugar Bad for You?]

Sugar's role in heart disease

Since then, studies have shown that consuming added sugar does in fact promote cardiovascular disease, Kimber Stanhope, a nutrition researcher at University of California, Davis, who consulted with the authors on the new study told Live Science.

For example, a 2014 study found a correlation between the percentage of calories in people's diets that came from added sugar and their risk of dying from cardiovascular disease, Stanhope said. And a 2015 study, which Stanhope led, found that supplementing young adults' diets with drinks sweetened with high-fructose corn syrup led to increased levels of cardiovascular risk factors in the blood, she said.

"Over the past 10 years, in particular, researchers have been very very aggressively studying sugar's role in metabolic diseases, including heart disease, and demonstrating what we should have been studying in 1965, when this whole thing started," Schmidt said.
Sugar Industry Quietly Paid Scientists To Point Blame At Fat

A newly discovered cache of internal documents reveals that the sugar industry paid to bury the risks of sugar in the 1960s thru till today.

CAMILA DOMONOSKE

A NEWLY DISCOVERED CACHE OF INTERNAL DOCUMENTS REVEALS THAT THE SUGAR INDUSTRY PAID TO BURY THE RISKS OF SUGAR IN THE 1960S THRU TILL TODAY

Luis Ascui/Getty Images

In the 1960s, the sugar industry funded research that downplayed the risks of sugar and highlighted the hazards of fat, according to a newly published article in JAMA Internal Medicine.
The article draws on internal documents to show that an industry group called the Sugar Research Foundation wanted to "refute" concerns about sugar's possible role in heart disease. The SRF then sponsored research by Harvard scientists that did just that. The result was published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 1967, with no disclosure of the sugar industry funding.
The sugar-funded project in question was a literature review, examining a variety of studies and experiments. It suggested there were major problems with all the studies that implicated sugar, and concluded that cutting fat out of American diets was the best way to address coronary heart disease.
THE SALT

In 'Soda Politics,' Big Soda At Crossroads Of Profit And Public Health

The authors of the new article say that for the past five decades, the sugar industry has been attempting to influence the scientific debate over the relative risks of sugar and fat.

"It was a very smart thing the sugar industry did, because review papers, especially if you get them published in a very prominent journal, tend to shape the overall scientific discussion," co-author Stanton Glantz told The New York Times.
THE SALT
How The Food Industry Manipulates Taste Buds With 'Salt Sugar Fat'
In the article, published Monday, authors Glantz, Cristin Kearns and Laura Schmidt aren't trying make the case
for a link between sugar and coronary heart disease. Their interest is in the process. They say the documents
reveal the sugar industry attempting to influence the scientific process.

The researchers note that they worked under some limitations — "We could not interview key actors involved
in this historical episode because they have died," they write. Other organizations were also advocating
concerns about fat, they note.

13.7: COSMOS AND CULTURE
Obesity And The Toxic-Sugar Wars
There's no evidence that the SRF directly edited the manuscript published by the Harvard scientists in 1967,
but there is "circumstantial" evidence that the interests of the sugar lobby shaped the conclusions of the review,
the researchers say.

For one thing, there's motivation and intent. In 1954, the researchers note, the president of the SRF gave a
speech describing a great business opportunity.

If Americans could be persuaded to eat a lower-fat diet — for the sake of their health — they would need to
replace that fat with something else. America's per capita sugar consumption could go up by a third.
But in the '60s, the SRF became aware of "flowing reports that sugar is a less desirable dietary source of
calories than other carbohydrates," as John Hickson, SRF vice president and director of research, put it in one
document.

He recommended that the industry fund its own studies — "Then we can publish the data and refute our
detractors."

The next year, after several scientific articles were published suggesting a link between sucrose and coronary
heart disease, the SRF approved the literature-review project. It wound up paying approximately $50,000 in
today's dollars for the research.

One of the researchers was the chairman of Harvard's Public Health Nutrition Department — and an ad hoc
member of SRF's board.

"A different standard" for different studies
Glantz, Kearns and Schmidt say many of the articles examined in the review were hand-selected by SRF, and
it was implied that the sugar industry would expect them to be critiqued.

In a letter, SRF's Hickson said that the organization's "particular interest" was in evaluating studies focused on
"carbohydrates in the form of sucrose."

"We are well aware," one of the scientists replied, "and will cover this as well as we can."

The project wound up taking longer than expected, because more and more studies were being released that
suggested sugar might be linked to coronary heart disease. But it was finally published in 1967.

Hickson was certainly happy with the result: "Let me assure you this is quite what we had in mind and we look
forward to its appearance in print," he told one of the scientists.
The review minimized the significance of research that suggested sugar could play a role in coronary heart disease. In some cases the scientists alleged investigator incompetence or flawed methodology.

"It is always appropriate to question the validity of individual studies," Kearns told Bloomberg via email. But, she says, "the authors applied a different standard" to different studies — looking very critically at research that implicated sugar, and ignoring problems with studies that found dangers in fat.

Epidemiological studies of sugar consumption — which look at patterns of health and disease in the real world — were dismissed for having too many possible factors getting in the way. Experimental studies were dismissed for being too dissimilar to real life.

One study that found a health benefit when people ate less sugar and more vegetables was dismissed because that dietary change was not feasible.

Another study, in which rats were given a diet low in fat and high in sugar, was rejected because "such diets are rarely consumed by man."

The Harvard researchers then turned to studies that examined risks of fat — which included the same kind of epidemiological studies they had dismissed when it came to sugar.

Citing "few study characteristics and no quantitative results," as Kearns, Glantz and Schmidt put it, they concluded that cutting out fat was "no doubt" the best dietary intervention to prevent coronary heart disease.

Sugar lobby: "Transparency standards were not the norm"

In a statement, the Sugar Association — which evolved out of the SRF — said it is challenging to comment on events from so long ago.

"We acknowledge that the Sugar Research Foundation should have exercised greater transparency in all of its research activities, however, when the studies in question were published funding disclosures and transparency standards were not the norm they are today," the association said.

"Generally speaking, it is not only unfortunate but a disservice that industry-funded research is branded as tainted," the statement continues. "What is often missing from the dialogue is that industry-funded research has been informative in addressing key issues."

The documents in question are five decades old, but the larger issue is of the moment, as Marion Nestle notes in a commentary in the same issue of JAMA Internal Medicine:

"Is it really true that food companies deliberately set out to manipulate research in their favor? Yes, it is, and the practice continues. In 2015, the New York Times obtained emails revealing Coca-Cola's cozy relationships with sponsored researchers who were conducting studies aimed at minimizing the effects of sugary drinks on obesity. Even more recently, the Associated Press obtained emails showing how a candy trade association funded and influenced studies to show that children who eat sweets have healthier body weights than those who do not."

As for the article authors who dug into the documents around this funding, they offer two suggestions for the future.

"POLICYMAKING COMMITTEES SHOULD CONSIDER GIVING LESS WEIGHT TO FOOD INDUSTRY-FUNDED STUDIES," THEY WRITE.
Sugar Study Draws Attention to Food Industry’s Sour Secret

Food industries have long opened their wallets to snag a piece of the science pie.

Sugar doesn’t taste quite so sweet today.

As Anahad O’Connor reports for The New York Times, researchers have uncovered evidence that the sugar industry used its money and influence to blame saturated fat, not sugar, as a cause of heart disease during the 1960s—a play that influenced decades of health policy as American obesity and heart disease rates surged. Though this study is the newest evidence of the industry’s apparently longstanding practice of burying biased health research, it’s certainly not the first.

The new analysis, which was published in the journal JAMA, used historical documents from archives and libraries to reconstruct the sugar industry’s interactions with three Harvard scientists throughout the 1960s. They found that the Sugar Research Foundation, a trade association that has since been renamed the Sugar Association, paid the equivalent of about $49,000 today to three scientists to conduct a literature review on scientific evidence about sugars, fats and coronary heart disease. Their investigation was eventually published in the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine. However, the foundation apparently cherry-picked data favorable to its desired conclusion that fat, not sugar, was linked to coronary heart disease and its funding of the review was not disclosed.

That wasn’t the only time the sugar industry exerted influence on health research. As Smithsonian.com reported in 2015, the sugar lobby also had a hand in developing federal guidelines about sugar intake and cavities and successfully blocked federal studies about the links between sugar and cavities until at least the 1970s. And in 2014, the Union of Concerned Scientists accused the Sugar Association and Corn Refiners Association (who lobby on behalf of high-fructose corn syrup) of actively countering science that shows negative effects linked to consumption of added sugars. The report cited tactics like threatening to suspend funding to the World Health Organization, paying scientists to promote the idea that corn syrup and table sugar are metabolically similar, and stating that it planned to “bury the data” if study results confirmed ill effects of added sweeteners, reports Zoë Schlanger for Newsweek.
Don’t you love people that cling to scientific research without ever questioning who sponsored that research? Using archival documents, a new report published by JAMA Internal Medicine examines the sugar industry’s role in heart disease research. The study suggests that the sugar industry sponsored research to influence the scientific debate to cast doubt on the hazards of sugar and to promote dietary fat as the culprit in heart disease. Governments worldwide agreed just like they did with the tobacco industry and big pharma.

The sugar industry was instrumental in influencing the prevailing thinking about fat, obesity and related diseases holding that quantifying calories should be a principal concern and target for intervention.

Part of this thinking is that consumed calories — regardless of their sources — are equivalent; i.e. “a calorie is a calorie.” There needs to be a greater qualitative focus on the sources of calories consumed (i.e., a greater focus on types of foods) and on the metabolic changes that result from consuming foods of different types.

Calorie-focused thinking is inherently biased against high-fat foods, many of which may be protective against obesity and related diseases, and supportive of starchy and sugary replacements, which are likely detrimental.

The intake of dietary fructose increased significantly from 1970 to 2000. There has been a 25% increase in available “added sugars” during this period. The average person has a daily added sugar intake of 79 g (equivalent to 15% of energy intake), approximately half of which was fructose. A report — authored by Cristin E. Kearns, Laura A. Schmidt, and Stanton A. Glantz of the University of California, San Francisco — examined internal documents from the Sugar Research Foundation (which later evolved into the Sugar Association). The Sugar Research Foundation started doing research on coronary heart disease research in 1965; its first project was a literature review published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 1967. The review focused on fat and cholesterol as the dietary causes of coronary heart disease, downplaying sugar consumption as a risk factor.
UCSF researchers have recently claimed sugar should be controlled like alcohol and tobacco to protect public health since it is fueling a global obesity pandemic, contributing to 35 million deaths annually worldwide from non-communicable diseases like diabetes, heart disease and cancer. Like manufacturers from both Big Tobacco and Big Pharma who denied the presence of any danger in their products and even spent millions of dollars trying to discredit the research that points to problems, the Sugar Industry followed suit.

While the Sugar Research Foundation’s funding and role were not disclosed, internal documents reveal that the organization set the review’s objective, contributed articles to be included, and received drafts — a “smoking gun” linking the industry’s influence over the research it paid for, writes Marion Nestle in a related commentary, also published in JAMA Internal Medicine.

“This 50-year-old incident may seem like ancient history, but it is quite relevant, not least because it answers some questions germane to our current era. Is it really true that food companies deliberately set out to manipulate research in their favor? Yes, it is, and the practice continues,” writes Nestle, the Paulette Goddard Professor of Nutrition and Food Studies at NYU Steinhardt.

“Industry-sponsored nutrition research, like that of research sponsored by the tobacco, chemical, and pharmaceutical industries, almost invariably produces results that confirm the benefits or lack of harm of the sponsor’s products, even when independently sponsored research comes to opposite conclusions,” Nestle adds.

Nestle says the report should serve as a warning to policymakers, researchers, clinicians, and journalists in carefully interpreting studies funded by food companies with vested interests in the results, and highlights the need to find better ways to fund studies and to prevent and disclose conflicts of interest.
Scientists are asking people across the globe to lay off sugary drinks, linking the consumption to an estimated 184,000 adult deaths each year, including more than 25,000 Americans.

Overall, that means one in every 100 deaths from obesity-related diseases is caused by sugary beverages, according to a study published Monday in the journal Circulation. The study, conducted by researchers from Tufts University, found that the beverages would be responsible for 133,000 deaths from diabetes, 45,000 from cardiovascular disease and 6,450 from cancer.

[Sorry diet soda drinkers, your favorite beverage may lead to more belly fat as you age]

About three-fourths of the deaths due to sugary drinks were in developing countries, according to the study. Latin America, in particular, had among the highest death rates, with Mexico topping the list at 405 deaths per million adults, or about 24,000 total deaths. The United States ranked fourth, with 125 deaths per million adults.
Oh My God! Evil Big Sugar Has Killed Well Over a Billion People
Researchers collected data on deaths and disabilities from 2010 and calculated the direct effect that sugar-sweetened beverages had on public health based on dietary surveys reaching more than 600,000 people. The beverages in the study included sugar-sweetened sodas, fruit drinks, energy drinks, sweetened iced teas and homemade sugary drinks such as frescas.

The American Beverage Association dismissed the study when it was first presented to the American Heart Association as an abstract in 2013, taking issue that it had been presented without being published or peer-reviewed.

"This study does not show that consuming sugar-sweetened beverages causes chronic diseases and the authors themselves acknowledge that they are at best estimating effects of sugar-sweetened beverage consumption," the ABA said in a statement released Tuesday. "America’s beverage companies are doing their part to offer consumers the fact-based information and the beverage options they need to make the right choices for themselves and their families."

[America's getting even fatter according to the latest obesity statistics]

Now that the study has been peer-reviewed, its authors say they remain confident about the results.

"If the sugar industry's argument is that there's no correlation, that's not correct," said Dariush Mozaffarian, an author of the study and dean of Tufts University’s Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy.

Sugar-sweetened beverages are the main source of added sugars in the American diet, according to a scientific statement from the American Heart Association. In 2015, the U.S. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee also recommended that people replace soft drinks and other sugar-sweetened beverages with milk and 100 percent fruit juice.

In the United States, soda consumption has been on the decline for the past decade, and in Mexico, a year-old sugar tax has been credited for a slump in consumption.

"There's definitely been progress, but there's still a huge amount of soda consumption in the U.S. and globally," Mozaffarian said.
Avoid Sugar, Prevent Illnesses

Malaysians consume 26 teaspoons of sugar daily.
We are the 8th highest sugar user in the world.
80% of food items in U.S. grocery stores are spiked with added sugar.

1/3 of Americans will have diabetes by 2050.

- 1 pouch fruit snacks: 2.5 tsp sugar
- 30 candies: 4 tsp sugar
- 1 granola bar: 1.5 tsp sugar
- 1 packet sweetened oatmeal: 3 tsp sugar

Total Sugar = 11 tsp

Kids ages 9-13: No more than 10-11 tsp sugar/day

Fact: For every molecule of sugar you consume, it takes FIFTY-FOUR molecules of Magnesium for your body to process it.

Food For Thought
The Harmful Effects of Sugar

- Suppresses the immune system
- Leads to Chromium deficiency
- Leads to Cancer of the ovaries
- Causes copper deficiency
- Causes premature aging
- Causes tooth decay
- Contributes to obesity
- Causes arthritis
- Causes asthma
- Causes gallstones
- Causes heart disease
- Causes hemorrhoids
- Causes varicose veins
- Increases Cholesterol
- Contributes to diabetes
- Contributes to eczema
- Causes cardiovascular disease

Scientists declare war on sugar in food.

Sugar fed bad bacteria in the gut can take over your brain like an alien presence.

Millions die each year and Big Sugar's lawyers and power create confusion and distraction from the real issue, Disease.

But we can do something. We can share with people the ideas and the real science that reveals how Dangerous White Processed Hi Glycemic Sugar is.