Abstract

Title: Is pricing a way to affect share of fruits and vegetables in a diet?

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Background: Fruits and vegetables (FV) are important for health, including occurrence of diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular diseases. Said diseases cause most cases of illness and death in high-income countries. Only a small part of the population achieves the FV-intake goal, so a higher FV-intake is desirable. Besides general information campaigns there is another method of influencing what people might buy.

Objective: To examine whether different pricing is connected to FV-intake or purchase.

Search strategy: Databases PubMed, Scopus and Summon were searched with “vegetable consumption”, ”price/pricing policy” and ”food choice” in different combinations.

Selection criteria: Studies performed after year 2000 on at least 18 years old persons from North America, Europe or Australia, examining changes in FV-price and -purchase. Some additional parameters were excluded.

Data collection and analysis: Eleven articles were selected, whereof four met all the criteria. They were reviewed and the evidence was compiled according to the certain templates.

Main results: One cross-sectional study showed an association between higher FV-prices and lower FV-intake, but it didn’t explain any causation. Three RCTs with good design had small assorted groups who participated in realistic shopping situations. The intervention was different price discounts on FV. The studies showed consistent significant results of lower prices leading to higher FV-purchase. Evidence strength was deemed to be moderate.

Conclusions: The lowering of prices on FV might increase FV-purchase. Yet the evidence is not strong enough and more research with a larger number of participants is needed. There are further additional factors which may complicate the picture, such as total amount of purchased calories or socioeconomic belonging.