



RESPONSE TO COMMENT ON KAHN AND SIEVENPIPER

# Dietary Sugar and Body Weight: Have We Reached a Crisis in the Epidemic of Obesity and Diabetes? We Have, but the Pox on Sugar Is Overwrought and Overworked.

*Diabetes Care* 2014;37:957–962

Richard Kahn<sup>1</sup> and  
John L. Sievenpiper<sup>2,3</sup>

*Diabetes Care* 2014;37:e189 | DOI: 10.2337/dc14-1133

We thank Dr. Katan (1) for correctly pointing out an error in our article on the effects of sugar consumption (2). In our discussion of the study by de Ruyter et al. (3), we should have written that the difference between the intervention and control groups was in the BMI z-score, not a difference in body weight. We cited the z-score difference (which was indeed modest) and not body weight because the former was the primary outcome of the study (3) and because it takes into consideration the BMI relative to the child's age and sex. Of note in the trial, the BMI or body weight in the sugar-

free intervention group did not go down but only increased less than the control group. More important, as indicated in the trial report (3), when the study completers and dropouts were combined (i.e., an intention-to-treat analysis), the BMI z-score difference between groups was not significant ( $P = 0.06$ ). Thus, we maintain that the trial results were not persuasive that sugar per se has an impact on body weight. Indeed, sugary beverages seem no better a target for reduction than any other source of excess calories. The issue likely remains overconsumption in general.

**Duality of Interest.** No potential conflicts of interest relevant to this article were reported.

## References

1. Katan MB. Comment on Kahn and Sievenpiper. Dietary sugar and body weight: have we reached a crisis in the epidemic of obesity and diabetes? We have, but the pox on sugar is overwrought and overworked. *Diabetes Care* 2014;37:957–962 (Letter). *Diabetes Care* 2014;37:e188. DOI: 10.2337/dc14-0888
2. Kahn R, Sievenpiper JL. Dietary sugar and body weight: have we reached a crisis in the epidemic of obesity and diabetes? We have, but the pox on sugar is overwrought and overworked. *Diabetes Care* 2014;37:957–962
3. de Ruyter JC, Olthof MR, Seidell JC, Katan MB. A trial of sugar-free or sugar-sweetened beverages and body weight in children. *N Engl J Med* 2012; 367:1397–1406

<sup>1</sup>Department of Medicine, University of North Carolina School of Medicine, Chapel Hill, NC

<sup>2</sup>Toronto 3D Knowledge Synthesis and Clinical Trials Unit, Clinical Nutrition and Risk Factor Modification Centre, St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto, Canada

<sup>3</sup>Department of Pathology and Molecular Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada

Corresponding author: Richard Kahn, rak6200@gmail.com.

© 2014 by the American Diabetes Association. Readers may use this article as long as the work is properly cited, the use is educational and not for profit, and the work is not altered.