



British Dental Association response to the consultation on the SACN draft report *Carbohydrates and health*

The British Dental Association (BDA) is the professional association and trade union for dentists practising in the UK. BDA members are engaged in all aspects of dentistry including general practice, salaried primary care dental services, the armed forces, hospitals, academia and research, and includes dental students.

The BDA welcomes the detailed review by SACN and the inclusion of oral health as a key consideration. We support the adoption of the free sugars definition, the recommended population-wide reduction of sugar consumption to five per cent of total energy intake and the stated need to minimise consumption of sugar-containing beverages. We note a recent paper by Sheiham and James (2014),¹ in addition to the World Health Organisation's new guidance on sugar intakes, both of which have independently made similar recommendations to SACN in relation to reducing sugar consumption. Sheiham and James concluded that previous analyses based on children have been misleading, and that the recommendation that sugar intakes should be no more than 10 per cent of energy intake is no longer acceptable: "The much greater adult burden of dental caries highlights the need for very low sugar intakes throughout life, e.g. two to three per cent of energy intake, whether or not fluoride intake is optimum". We call for further research, with the required funding, to fill the evidence gaps in relation to sugar and oral health highlighted in the draft SACN review.

Whilst we support the recommended reduction in sugar consumption to five per cent of energy intake, we feel that it will be a challenge even to achieve the current recommendation of 10 per cent, and, with this in mind, we will be scrutinising the policy recommendations by Public Health England that arise from the final SACN report.

1. Sheiham, A. and James, W.P.T (2014) A new understanding of the relationship between sugars, dental caries and fluoride use: implications for limits on sugars consumption; *Public Health Nutrition*.

**British Dental Association
64 Wimpole Street
London W1G 8YS
August 2014**