



Government lax in combatting obesity

The Dutch government does not do enough to tackle the rise in obesity in the population, conclude researchers at WUR and Utrecht University.

The researchers say that the government is failing to develop policies to ensure a healthy living environment. The government should encourage healthy food choices by reducing the VAT on fruit and vegetables and raising taxes on food containing a lot of fat, salt or sugar. The government could also ban advertising for unhealthy food aimed at children and

'A sugar tax has been proven to be effective'

forbid fast-food restaurants near schools.

The researchers argue that new measures are needed as

the proportion of overweight people in the Netherlands grew from 6 per cent in 1990 to 15 per cent in 2018, according to official figures. Obese people run a higher risk of cardiovascular diseases and diabetes, and of getting severe Covid if they become infected.

Maartje Poelman of the Consumption and Healthy Lifestyles group: 'A sugar tax has been proven to be effective and relatively simple to implement, as various countries, such as the UK, have already shown. Yet the Dutch government keeps putting it off: The government has plenty of good intentions and guidelines, say the researchers, but it isn't following through. **AS**