

Two sugary drinks a day can raise the risk of heart disease

Oliver Moody Science Correspondent

Consuming as little as two glasses of sweetened drinks a day is linked to a significantly greater risk of heart failure, according to a study.

The finding will add to pressure on the government to introduce a so-called sugar tax. Last week ministers were embarrassed into publishing a report in which civil servants recommended a 10 or 20 per cent tax on sugary drinks.

Academics at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm followed 42,000 men over the age of 45 for 12 years, recording their food and drinks with regular questionnaires. They found that those who drank two or more fizzy drinks or other

sweet beverages a day were 23 per cent more likely to suffer a heart problem than those who drank none.

The researchers did not include any data on women and fruit juices and sweetened tea and coffee were excluded from their analysis.

Francesco Cappuccio, professor of cardiovascular medicine and epidemiology at the University of Warwick, argued that there was a strong case for a sugar tax, "not only to reduce obesity, but to reduce the overall burden of cardiovascular disease". He added that salt could play an important role in elevating the risk of heart failure.

The study is published today in the journal *Heart*.

Dr Mark Porter, Times2