

## Study: How the sugar industry lied about heart disease

Internal documents from the 1960s show a Harvard coronary heart disease study was probably skewed, according to a [study published in JAMA Internal Medicine Monday](#).

The report by researchers at University of California, San Francisco, reveals the Sugar Research Foundation sweetened research in its favor — to blame fats, instead of sugars, for high rates of coronary heart disease.

In the 1960s, physiologist John Yudkin said added sugars were to blame for the upward trend in heart disease. Physiologist Ancel Keys pointed to total fat, saturated fat, and dietary cholesterol. Shortly after the two revealed these findings, the Sugar Research Foundation (now called the Sugar Association) funded a study to elevate Keys' research.

SRF's vice president and director of research John Hickson said the Sugar Research Foundation "could embark on a major program" to squash "negative attitudes toward sugar." His plan was to review the existing reports, find "weak points" and "replicate the studies with appropriate corrections" to argue against critics of sugar consumption.

Hickson hired Harvard nutrition experts to put together a fresh, well-crafted [1967 study](#).

Monday's report cites the industry continued to fund research that sidestepped sugar's effects on health, including a 1970s review influencing the 1976 US Food and Drug Administration evaluation of the safety of sugar. Studies available today say sugar does play a role in heart disease.

"The industry may have a long history of influencing federal policy," the JAMA report says.

The coronary heart disease report ultimately published with no indication it was funded by the sugar industry. In 1984, *NEJM* began requiring authors to disclose all conflicts of interest.

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