

A new method to monitor the performance of food companies in relation to nutritional targets

Reference

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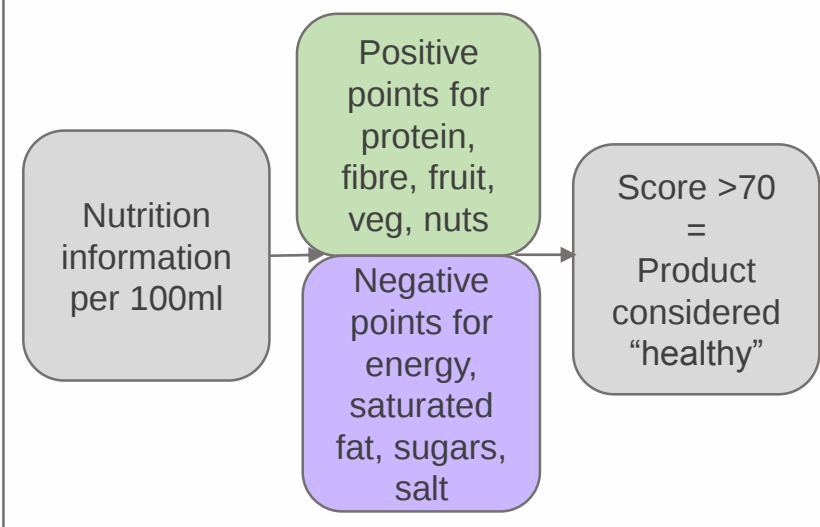
Background and Objectives:

There is currently no adequate way of monitoring the public health impacts of industry-led changes in the food supply. The aim of this study is to test if big data can be used to monitor trends in the nutritional quality of the food supply in the UK, including through reformulation and changes in market share, by category, brand and company.

Methods:

UK volume sales data and the products’ nutrition information for 194 soft drink products in 2015 were acquired from market research firm Euromonitor. The Ofcom Nutrient Profiling Model (figure 1) was applied to the top 20 companies’ products and a sales-weighted average was calculated to create a company index. The total volume of sugars in tonnes was also calculated.

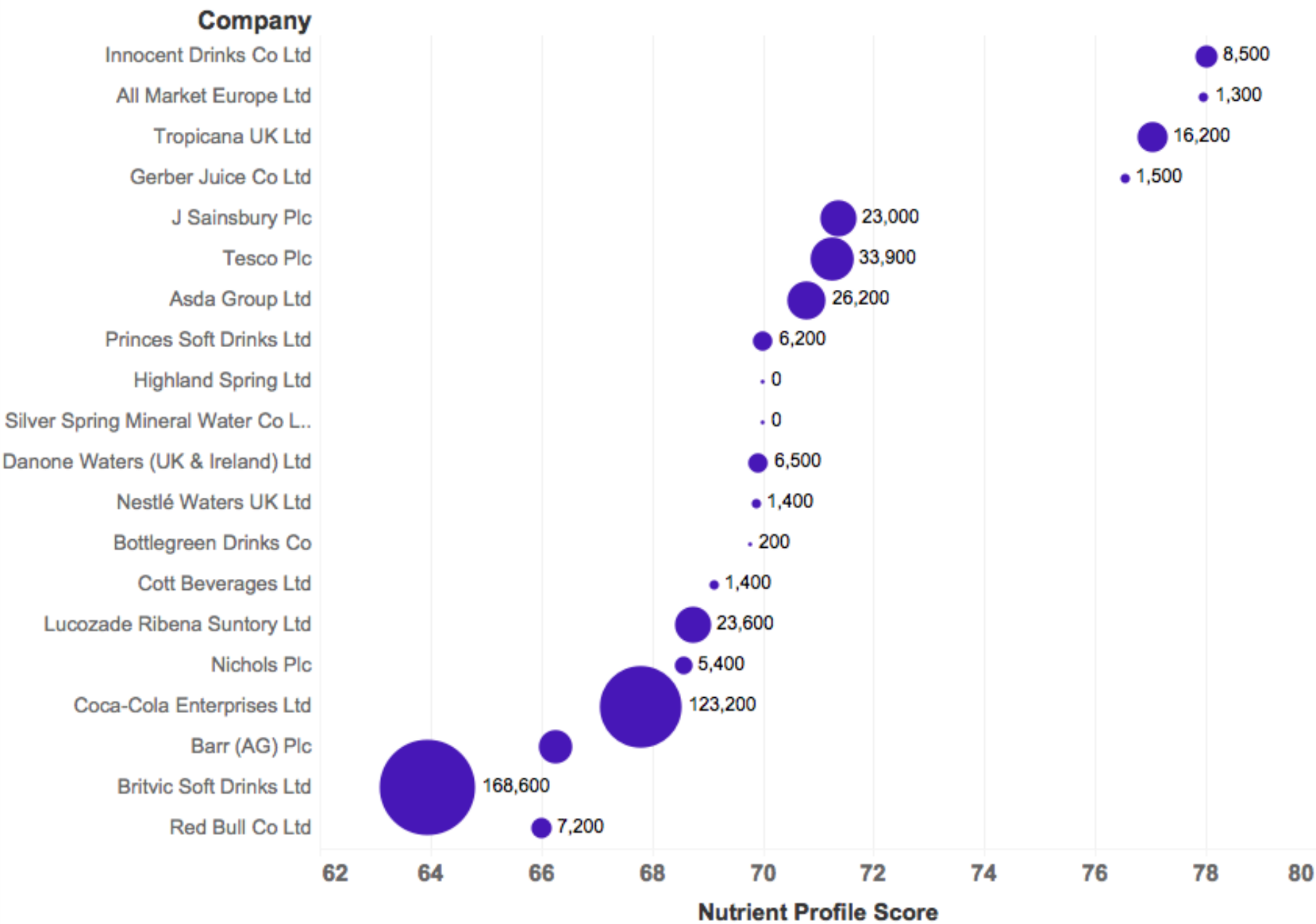
Figure 1: UK Nutrient Profiling Model



Results:

Soft Drink Company Index 2015

Sales weighted mean sugar content of products and total tonnes of sugar sold



Companies ranked by nutrient profile score. Size of bubble and label denote tonnes of sugar sold. Dashed line indicates “healthy” threshold; products that score above 70 can be advertised to children.

Discussion

Sales data may be a useful tool for comparing the overall ‘health footprint’ of soft drink companies in the UK. This method could be applied to other food and beverage categories and used to benchmark companies across their portfolio. It could also be used over time to monitor food reformulation policy, and to make international comparisons.

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