DRAFT

Graphic evidence of research misconduct in science at an Australian “Group of Eight” university:
The University of Sydney’s *Australian Paradox* fraud

Rory Robertson, September 2013

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Charts: This presentation features Figures 1-11. Eight of those 13 charts are reproduced directly from Professor Jennie Brand-Miller and Dr Alan Barclay’s three formal publications on this matter: (i) *Australian Paradox*; (ii) *Australian Paradox Revisited*; and (iii) Response to *Trends in sugar supply and consumption in Australia: is there an Australian Paradox?*

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DRAFT: Graphic evidence of research misconduct in science at an Australian “Group of Eight” university: The University of Sydney’s Australian Paradox fraud
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1. Introduction and conclusion
The problem is that the University of Sydney is pretending that its spectacularly faulty self-published paper – with an obviously incorrect conclusion - seeking to exonerate harmful sugary softdrinks as a menace to public health is, in fact, flawless “peer-reviewed” science. In this update, there are 13 graphs, three of them new. If you do nothing else, please benchmark the Australian Paradox paper’s “findings” below against those 13 graphs. In this episode, co-authors Professor Jennie Brand-Miller (JBM) and Dr Alan Barclay (AWB) falsely claim that up is down (Figures 1-5) and that trivial is substantial (Figure 6 versus 6a), while recklessly embracing falsified data as fact (Figures 7-10).

The University of Sydney scientists’ and management’s determined refusal for 18 months to correct or retract their error-laden Australian Paradox analysis - instead defending it by pretending that eye-popping factual errors do not exist, and relying on data that are falsified - has transformed this episode into a scandal featuring “research misconduct” as defined by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), including, amongst other things: (i) “recklessness or gross and persistent negligence”; (ii) “serious consequences, such as false information on the public record”; and (iii) “failure to declare and manage serious conflicts of interest”: Sections 1-10 of www.australianparadox.com

![4. Discussion](http://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/3/4/491)

This piece has been prepared specifically for:

x Dr Michael Spence and Professor Jill Trewhella, Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) of the University of Sydney. Their problem is the Australian Paradox fraud, involving a clownish journal article, its clearly false “finding” on the origins of obesity and the University’s highest-profile obesity researchers’ reckless refusal to properly correct or retract their nonsense-based “findings”. Awkwardly, the unreliable food-industry service providers are set to move into the new $500 million Charles Perkins’s Centre, ensuring that concerns about competence and scientific integrity gather as dark clouds around that new giant-sized obesity-research hub, even before its doors open: [http://www.smh.com.au/national/university-sets-up-500m-centre-for-obesity-research-20130724-2qiq8.html](http://www.smh.com.au/national/university-sets-up-500m-centre-for-obesity-research-20130724-2qiq8.html)


x The Editorial Boards of Nutrients and BMC Public Health, the latter journal publishing on the topic recently: [http://www.mdpi.com/journal/nutrients/editors#editorialoffice](http://www.mdpi.com/journal/nutrients/editors#editorialoffice); [http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/13/668](http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/13/668); [http://www.biomedcentral.com/bmcpublichealth/about/edboard](http://www.biomedcentral.com/bmcpublichealth/about/edboard)

This piece may assist Dr Spence and/or Mr Rordorf to convince their under-supervised underlings to stop pretending that their clownish paper is flawless, and to stop recklessly resisting its correction or retraction. To fast-track the process, here’s my proposed Retraction Notice, first posted in a discussion with Mr Rordorf on Retraction Watch:

Abstract: It has been brought to our attention by a reader of Nutrients that the conclusion of “a consistent and substantial decline” in per-capita sugar consumption between 1980 and 2010 in “The Australian Paradox: A Substantial Decline in Sugars Intake over the Same Timeframe that Overweight and Obesity Have Increased” is based in part on a data
series that was falsified by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). MDPI has a strict “zero tolerance policy” towards the use of falsified data, whether the authors were aware of the invalidity of the data or not. Moreover, there are further major errors and misinterpretations that collapse the credibility of the manuscript’s conclusion of “an inverse relationship” between sugar intake and obesity. For example, it turns out that the authors’ own chart suggests that the intake of sugar via softdrinks increased as obesity bulged between 1980 and 2010. Unfortunately, that observation removes a central element of the authors’ claimed “paradox”. The authors’ business links to the sugar and sugary food industries also are somewhat unsettling. Taking public-health considerations into account – particularly evidence that excessive sugar consumption is a major contributor to global obesity and type 2 diabetes, together the greatest public-health challenge of our times: http://core.diabetesjournals.org/content/33/11/2477.full.pdf – the Editorial Team and Publisher have determined that this manuscript should be retracted. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. http://retractionwatch.wordpress.com/2013/08/22/journal-to-feature-special-issue-on-scientific-misconduct-seeks-submissions/

To be clear, my dispute with the University at its core is not about science or nutrition, it’s about simple things like up versus down, valid versus invalid and the need to correct serious errors in the public debate. The analysis is clownish, the conclusion is wrong and the public record must be corrected. There is no Australian Paradox, just a negligent assessment of the available information by University of Sydney scientists, recklessly defended by senior management.

Readers, false information including falsified data has no place in either “peer reviewed” science or the public debate. Group of Eight research must demonstrate at least some modest level of competence and integrity; after all, taxpayers are not interested in funding obviously incompetent analysis, especially that which tends to put their children’s health at risk. In my opinion, the Australian Paradox paper is an academic disgrace and a menace to public health: http://www.smh.com.au/national/health/research-causes-stir-over-sugars-role-in-obesity-20120330-1w3e5.html

It’s a pity for taxpayers that the reputation of the University of Sydney’s new $500 million Charles Perkins Centre (see earlier link) has become entangled in the scandal involving the University’s senior management failing to properly balance the need for scientific integrity against the need for its Glycemic Index (GI) business cashflows (more on those later). The obvious errors and misrepresentations promoted by the influential obesity researchers are documented below, yet University management has chosen for more than a year to pretend that its “shonky sugar study” is flawless. Unfortunately, that is scientific fraud, as argued in 1-10 of http://www.australianparadox.com/

MDPI CEO Dietrich Rordorf’s journal Nutrients says it has a “zero tolerance” policy towards falsified data. The Group of Eight also should have such a policy, and it should be enforced. The only credible way forward for Vice-Chancellor Spence and MDPI’s Mr Rordorf is to instruct their under-supervised scientists Professor Jennie Brand-Miller (JBM) and Dr Alan Barclay (AWB) to correct or retract their self-published and spectacularly faulty Australian Paradox paper.

When I write “self-published”, I mean that the lead author – JBM - and the “Guest Editor” of the publishing journal – JBM – are the same person! http://www.mdpi.com/journal/nutrients/special_issues/carbohydrates Outrageously, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor Jill Trewella, suggests that this cosy arrangement is consistent with “internationally accepted standard practice”. Yet incompetent quality control by the University of Sydney, MDPI’s “Guest Editor” and its other editors are the principal factor behind the negligent publication and fallacious defence of JBM and AWB’s outrageously faulty analysis: http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Sept2012-Conversations.pdf

When I write “incompetent”, I mean eye-popping. The original paper would never have been published in a real journal with real quality control. (Please open the paper via the mdpi.com link above.) For starters, notice that the “3 fold” increase in obesity in Australia discussed in the Abstract (p. 491) morphed into a “300%” increase, not 200%, in Conclusions (p. 502). I’m not saying that’s a hanging offence. I’m saying schoolboy errors are important because they reinforce my claim that no-one competent – authors, independent reviewers or editors - read the paper before it was self-published. Did lead author JBM actually read her own paper before its self-publication? (see Section 2 in next link)

Sloppy little errors such as 300% and “600 g” (on Figure 6, below) – and later “Roberston” and “Aparrent” (on Figure 10) - quickly gave way to major errors so dominating that they argue for the paper’s retraction. Again, JBM and AWB claim that up is down (Figures 1-5) and that barely trivial is substantial (Figure 6 versus 6a), while recklessly embracing falsified data as fact (Figures 7-10). Unfortunately, Dr Spence and Professor Trewella have unwisely sought to verify the veracity of the extraordinarily faulty paper by claiming that JBM’s research was “peer reviewed” (so get lost!), as if the catastrophic failure of any actual “peer review” process excuses the University’s reckless promotion of false information in the debate on the origins of obesity and type 2 diabetes: Section 8 in www.australianparadox.com

Please read Sections 2-5 below. I am not making any of this up. You can make up your own minds about the extent of the sub-standard scholarship. In any case, in seeking the correction or retraction of the spectacularly faulty paper, I was impressed recently by the University of Queensland’s insistence that scientific integrity be given the highest priority:
In summary, until the incompetent Australian Paradox paper is corrected or retracted, we must conclude that:

- There is no quality control or integrity in University of Sydney “science” when it matters. For now, it is happily pretending that its clownish Australian Paradox paper – featuring an obviously false conclusion - is flawless “peer reviewed” science. The University is yet to properly respond to my well-documented claim of “research misconduct”, as defined by the NHMRC, and as documented in Sections 1-10 in www.australianparadox.com
- There is no quality control or integrity in MDPI journals when it matters. MDPI CEO Mr Dietrich Rordorf must stop pretending MDPI has no problem with scientific integrity and, instead, fix the glaring problems at Nutrients.
- The Australian Paradox fraud has put a dark cloud over the competence and integrity of future research at the new $500 million Charles Perkins Centre (CPC). The University has spent vast amounts of taxpayers’ money to build a research base for investigations into obesity and related maladies while recklessly pretending that its highest-profile obesity study – both an academic disgrace and a menace to public health – is flawless “peer reviewed” science. If the University will not correct or retract an obviously faulty paper that completely mangles a basic assessment of simple empirical facts, why should anyone trust it to competently tackle difficult topics?
- There is no quality control or integrity in Group of Eight (Go8) research when it matters. The University of Sydney’s current policy of ignoring the need for competence and integrity in research makes a mockery of the Go8’s enthusiasm for increased taxpayer funding, in the national interest, you understand, on the basis that “research intensive universities” are special: http://www.go8.edu.au/university-staff/go8-policy- and -analysis/2013/discussion-paper-the-role-and-importance-of-research-intensive-universities The Go8 has done exactly nothing to force its delinquent member, the University of Sydney, to give scientific integrity the necessary priority.
- With quality control thus as non-existent when it matters, we are left in the dark about which particular pieces of Go8 research are fact-based and which are nonsense-based. Accordingly, we cannot trust Go8 research.

The Go8 and the University of Sydney should follow the University of Queensland’s approach on scientific integrity, ditching the current policy of “pretend there is no problem and then hope the problem goes away”. Importantly, since both the Australian Senate and House of Representatives have been misled by the University of Sydney’s Australian Paradox fraud - see Summary and Section 8 in http://www.australianparadox.com/ - I urge Federal Parliament to launch an independent investigation into this matter. Please consider this document Exhibit A for that investigation.

2. University of Sydney’s clownish self-published analysis of simple softdrink statistics

Readers, the main reason we can be sure that the “finding” of “a consistent and substantial decline” in sugar intake between 1980 and 2010 is unreliable is because much of the available data are woefully incomplete and ridiculously dated. Moreover, what data there are tend to point in the other direction! The clownish nature of the Australian Paradox paper is on full display in the University of Sydney’s analysis of sugar consumption via sugary softdrinks.

As background, my guess is that most people born before 1970 and who walk around with their eyes open have personally observed a significant increase in sales and consumption of sugary softdrinks between 1980 and 2010. If I am right on that, readers, few of you will be puzzled to find – in Figure 2 below, a reproduction of JBM and AWB’s own chart in Australian Paradox - that sales of sugary softdrinks (top line) rose by 30%, from 35L to 45L, between 1994 and 2006.

As I said, the data presented by JBM and AWB are dated, incomplete and so inadequate to prove anything much. But obviously a 30% increase in sugary softdrink sales between 1994 and 2006, if anything, contradicts rather than supports the claim that there was “a consistent and substantial decline” in sugar consumption between 1980 and 2010. Moreover, given that the issue is the volume of sugar in sugary softdrinks, JBM and AWB’s confused focus on non-sugary drinks including bottled water is a complete forlorn. That is, beverage-industry market shares are irrelevant in an historical analysis of per-capita sugar consumption: diet drink and bottled water equal zero sugar equals big fat forfury!

Okay, so Figure 2 points up not down, right? Right. Yet AWB and JBM claim that our 30% increase in sugary softdrink sales is actually a 10% decline: “Food industry data indicate that per capita sales of low calorie (non-nutritively sweetened) beverages doubled from 1994 to 2006 [correct, from about 15L to 30L] while nutritively sweetened beverages decreased by 10%” (on page 500). No, they rose by 30% from 35L to 45L. Readers, that’s a blatant error that should be corrected immediately - replacing “decreased by 10%” with “increased by 30%” - alongside JBM and AWB’s initial formal Correction way back in August 2011: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3257697/

Confronted several times about their clownish false claim of a 10% decrease in sales of sugary softdrinks, JBM and AWB always retreat to their Figure 6. Ironically, Figure 6 merely highlights further blatant errors. For starters, the self-

...UQ places the highest importance on upholding the integrity of our research and will not only continue to do so with vigilance but will seek to identify further measures to strengthen that endeavour. By having the paper retracted, the University enables the global scientific community to learn that the research reported in the paper has no place in the body of scientific knowledge, and so cannot be used as a basis for further research. http://www.uq.edu.au/news/?article=26661
published text above Figure 6 (shown below) reports: “Overall, there was a decrease in sugar contribution from nutritively sweetened carbonated soft drinks to the Australian food supply, amounting to 12,402 tons (~600 g per person per year, Figure 6) from 2002 to 2006”. Readers, let’s “peer review” that “~600 g per person per year” calculation.

So, how’s your competence in junior-school maths? Let’s see: “12,402 tons” spread over four years is 12,402,000,000 grams over four years, shared between roughly 20 million Australians. Dividing by four, that’s ~3,000,000,000 grams per annum shared between ~20, 000,000 of us. Cancel seven zeros and that’s ~300 grams per year between two people. Or ~150 g per person per year, not “~600 g per person per year”. That error too should be formally corrected – by replacing “600 g” with “150 g” - without further unreasonable delay. Anyone think I’m wrong?

Importantly, 150 g per person per annum is trivial in the general scheme of things. Indeed, when the tonnage figures shown in Figure 6 are properly converted to kilograms per person per year in my Figure 6a - as they should have been in the first place – JBM and AWB’s “substantial” tonnage figures collapse to nothin’gness: the “kg per person per year” series runs along the X-axis at zero. Readers, my Figure 6a shows that there is no “substantial decline”, collapsing the credibility of JBM and AWB’s Figure 6 and making a mockery of their latest nonsense-based defence of Australian Paradox: see final paragraph on p.10 in http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-13-668.pdf

In summary, looking solely at sensationally simple sloppiness with sugary softdrink sales (and with the embrace of falsified data promoted as fact in Figures 7-10 to come), the Australian Paradox paper is cluelessly clownish in a variety of ways:

- JBM and AWB confused a 30% increase in sugary softdrink sales with a 10% decrease. That’s hard to do, and still get published! That error must be corrected in Nutrients.
- JBM and AWB’s now-nonexistent 10% decrease in sales of sugary softdrinks was central to their claimed “paradox”: consumption down, obesity up. The clear uptrend in their sugary softdrink “line of evidence” belies the paradox – consumption up, obesity up: what paradox? - arguing for the joke Australian Paradox paper’s retraction.
- JBM and AWB miscalculated that “600 g” figure; the correct figure is 150g. Again, a formal correction is required.
- JBM and AWB also misread the significance of their supposedly giant-sized “12,402 tons” of sugar in Figure 6. In fact, when properly scaled - “kg per person per year” in my Figure 6a - their claim of a “substantial decline” is revealed to be complete nonsense, adding to the case for retraction. Sugar consumption via sugary softdrinks did not decline substantially. Indeed, it’s hard to think it did not increase substantially. After all, big-sellers like Coca Cola, Sprite and Fanta all still have sugar contents in excess of 10%, and that 30% uptrend between 1994 and 2006 almost certainly was preceded by a similarly strong uptrend between 1980 and 1994. Sugar drinks up. Obesity up. What paradox?

Does anyone think any of my simple observations above are wrong? Does anyone think it is reasonable for JBM, AWB, Dr Spence and Professor Trewhella to keep insisting that this nonsense is flawless “peer-reviewed” science?

Beyond that clownish analysis, it’s clear that JBM and AWB have recklessly misread “the science” of sugary softdrinks: even in 2011, there was strong evidence that such drinks are a key driver of global obesity and type 2 diabetes: http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/33/11/2477.full.pdf+html So too, sugary drinks are widely seen as a key driver of heart disease and some cancers: http://www.rethinksugarydrink.org.au/ From “5. Conclusions” (above), it’s clear that the Australian Paradox paper was designed to try to exonerate (harmful) sugary drinks as a menace to public health. Notably, JBM and AWB already had sought to exonerate sugar as a driver of type 2 diabetes in their pop-sci diet books: http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/diabetes.pdf All of the above argues that the reckless paper should be retracted.

Tragically, if not widely understood, outsized rates of sugar and sugary drink consumption – alongside alcohol and tobacco – are a major driver of the unacceptable “gap” in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians: see the bottom row of Table/Box 2 in https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2013/198/7/characteristics-community-level-diet-aboriginal-people-remote-northern-australia

So how did the University of Sydney get it so wrong? It is hard to know exactly. Awkwardly, JBM and AWB’s major conflicts of interest are a serious and unsettling issue. The background here is that JBM and AWB are amongst the world’s foremost advocates of the (low) Glycemic Index (GI) approach to nutrition. On the GI scale, food and drinks GI=55 and under supposedly are Healthy while those over 55 are somewhat less so.

Notably, Coca Cola is low GI=53. Yes, Coca Cola is at the healthy end of the GI scale, according to PROFESSOR JENNIE BRAND-MILLER’S LOW GI DIET Shopper’s Guide 2013 (Hachette Australia, p. 107). JBM’s low-GI approach likes Coca Cola; in turn, Coca Cola likes JBM’s Australian Paradox paper exonerating sugary drinks as a key driver of global obesity: http://www.smh.com.au/national/health/research-causes-stir-over-sugars-role-in-obesity-20120330-1w3e5.html Interestingly, AWB was happy to take the time to tell his faulty Australian Paradox story for the Coca Cola company: http://www.livepositively.com.au/Webinar?id=5 Notably, the University of Sydney helped the Australian sugar industry to produce a new brand of sugar in the late 2000s, and continues to promote the consumption of many sugary processed carbohydrates: http://www.csrsugar.com.au/Better-For-You-Products/CSR-LoGiCane-LowGI-Sugar.aspx Yes, it’s all sweet.
While still busy trying to exonerate harmful sugary softdrinks as a health hazard in 2013, AWB and JBM are presented in the *BMC Public Health* journal as associated only with the “Australian Diabetes Council” and the “School of Molecular Bioscience and Boden Institute of Obesity, Nutrition and Exercise, University of Sydney”: p.9 of http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-13-668.pdf

Left undisclosed to global readers of the *BMC Public Health* journal is the fact that JBM and AWB’s day jobs and careers revolve around the operation of the University of Sydney’s Glycemic Index (GI) enterprise, which exists in part to charge food companies up to $6,000 a pop to stamp particular brands of sugar and sugary products as Healthy: pp. 10-11 of http://www.gisymbol.com.au/cmsAdmin/uploads/Glycemic-Index-Foundation-Healthy-Choices-Brochure.pdf ; p. 5 http://www.foodhealthdialogue.gov.au/internet/foodandhealth/publishing.nsf/Content/D59B2C8391006638CA2578E600834BBD/$File/Resources%20and%20support%20for%20reformulation%20activities.pdf

This major financial conflict of interest is rather unsettling, given JBM and AWB’s reckless misreading of the science of sugary softdrinks on top of their ham-fisted assessment of the available information on trends in softdrink and sugar consumption, including their ongoing embrace of falsified data as fact. With the University of Sydney’s highest-profile food-industry service providers recklessly exonerating harmful sugary softdrinks as harmless, outsiders can only look on and wonder if JBM and AWB on this matter are wearing their “scientist” hats or “GI business” hats?

3. FAO’s falsified data to the fore

Readers, please take a close look at Figures 9 and 10 below, reproduced from *Australian Paradox*. Notice that the green readings spanning 1999-2002 form a flat line. Isn’t that remarkable? I say remarkable because, as many are aware, perhaps the rarest thing in nature – and so naturally rare in real-life scientific observations of humans, animals and plants - is a dead-straight flat line. Indeed, the term “flat-lining” is associated with things not living but dead.

Yes, that flat line literally is remarkable. And yet the University of Sydney has avoided remarking on it like the plague. Indeed, one of the extraordinary aspects of the *Australian Paradox* scandal is that while supposedly wrestling with a "paradox", JBM and AWB never felt the need to remark upon this remarkable thing. For as long as they could, AWB and JBM avoided the plague a discussion of the remarkably flat falsified green lines in Charts 21 and 22 at http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/22Slideshowaustraliangoestoparadoxcanberrafinal.pdf

Importantly, that flat-lining data series in Figures 9 and 10 below was a correct hint of falsified figures. In fact, JBM and AWB’s critical Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) sugar series is conspicuously flat in the 2000s because the FAO began falsifying its Australian sugar series after 1998-99, after the ABS discontinued as unreliable its apparent consumption series: *Contrast Letter 4 and Letter 6* in http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/FAOfalsifiedsugar.pdf

That is, after spoon-feeding sugar data to the FAO for decades, the ABS after 1998-99 simply stopped counting, simply discontinued the series as unreliable. So there are no valid data after 1998-99. Full stop. Outrageously, the FAO chose to publish the dead-end figure from 1998-99, year after year. That’s why we have a falsified flat line in JBM and AWB’s preferred chart, the chart on which the flagrantly false *Australian Paradox* “finding” seeks to rely (Figure 10, above).

Amusingly, in response to the University of Western Australia (UWA) researchers Rikkers *et al* in a formal journal putting the spotlight on JBM and AWB’s sloppy scholarship, our under-supervised authors finally were forced to remark upon the remarkably flat falsified line upon which they had chosen not to remark previously, not in *Australian Paradox* nor *Australian Paradox Revisited*. Forced to respond to Rikkers *et al*, JBM and AWB claimed outrageously – either cluelessly or disingenuously - that "...the data for the 4-year period 1999–2003 now appear to have been underestimated": p. 10 of http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-13-668.pdf

No, not underestimated. Falsified. Those FAO data were falsified at the time of JBM and AWB’s initial self-publication back in 2011 and they still are falsified today (see FAO link above).

Readers, most experienced analysts would have been cautious about embracing a data series in 2011 that the ABS had discontinued as unreliable a decade earlier, after 60 years! Furthermore, there is a fairly widespread convention amongst competent scientists and administrators across the globe that there is no role for falsified data in "peer reviewed" science. Why is one of Australia’s Group of Eight universities taking a completely different approach?

Even the discredited e-journal *Nutrients* says - http://www.mdpi.com/about - it has a “zero tolerance policy” towards falsified data, although it has done nothing about the flat-lining falsified figures that feature in the faulty *Australian Paradox* paper. Journalists, why not phone a sample of our Group of Eight Vice-Chancellors and enquire about policy covering their scientists’ use of falsified data in “peer reviewed” science? Okay or not okay? http://www.go8.edu.au/go8-members/go8-board
Figure 1: Australian sugar availability (kg per person per year)

Source: Australian Paradox Revisited; My "trend" for "the past 30 years"

Figure 2: Australian softdrink sales; Top (dark) line is sugary softdrinks (Litres per person per year)

Source: Australian Paradox
Figure 3: National surveys - Adults
TOTAL SUGARS (ADDED & NATURALLY OCCURRING)

Year
Source: Australian Paradox

Figure 4: National surveys - Children
TOTAL SUGARS (ADDED & NATURALLY OCCURRING)

Year
Source: Australian Paradox
Figure 4a: National surveys - Children

Source: Australian Paradox

Figure 5: Australian sugar industry’s measure of sugar consumption

Sugar industry’s “independent” Green Pool sugar series
"Australian Per Capita Sugar Consumption" (kg per person per year)

Data source: "Australian Sugar Refiners and CANEGROWERS" via "Green Pool Commodity Specialists"
Sugar industry’s “independent” Green Pool sugar series:
http://greenpoolcommodities.com/news/australian-per-capita-sugar-consumption-key-figures/

Figure 6: Annual change in sugar via sugary drinks (tonnes per year)

Figure 6 shows the annual change in the contribution of sugar from nutritively sweetened carbonated soft drinks (sugar-sweetened soft drinks) to the Australian food supply [30]. Levy and Tapsell [30] reported a concurrent increase in sugar from other nutritively sweetened beverages (e.g., sports drinks, flavored waters and iced teas). However, the increase in sugar contribution to the food supply from these beverages did not contribute enough volume to match the decline in nutritively sweetened carbonated soft drinks. Overall, there was a decrease in sugar contribution from nutritively sweetened carbonated soft drinks to the Australian food supply, amounting to 12,402 tons (~600 g per person per year, Figure 6) from 2002 to 2006.

Source: *Australian Paradox*

Figure 6a: Annual change in sugar via sugary drinks (kg per person per year)

(Calculated by multiplying readings in Figure 6 by 1000, then dividing by our ~20,000,000 population)

Yes, AWB and JBM's "line of evidence" in Figure 6 is trivial in the general scheme of things. Again, genuine evidence of "a consistent and substantial decline" in sugar consumption does not exist.

Source: Figure 6 plus overdue basic calculation by RR. (Where was competent "peer review"?)
Figure 7: FAO’s falsified sugars series (updated) versus Green Pool series

![Graph showing Australian refined sugar supply/consumption (kg per person per year) from 1988 to 2009.](image)

- **FAO: 1988-1999**
- **ABS: 1988-1999**
- **FAO: Falsified series, 2000-2009**
- **Sugar industry’s "Green Pool" series, 2000-2009**


Figure 8: No valid evidence of “a consistent and substantial decline”

The FAO series are falsified after 1998-99. As we saw in Figure 5, the ABS/Green Pool sugar series is flat/up over past quarter-century (check the 12-year averages). How do you spell “Aparrent”?

![Graph showing Australian refined sugar supply/consumption (kg per person per year) from 1980 to 2011.](image)

- **FAOstat: Sugars and Sweeteners**
- **GreenPool: Aparrent consumption**
- **FAOStat: Sugar, refined**

Source: Rikkers et al, *Is there an Australian Paradox?*  
Figure 9: FAO’s falsified sugars series in *Australian Paradox* (kg per person per year)

Blue = Total added sugars;  Green = refined sucrose  
Red = Other sweeteners, eg. high-fructose corn syrup)

Source: Australian Paradox

Figure 10: 1998-99 data dead-end; didn’t notice falsified data or just didn’t say?

4. Big-picture summary of the University of Sydney’s three nonsense-based “lines of evidence”

Readers, the *Australian Paradox* claim is very specific, involving “a consistent and substantial decline” in sugar consumption “over the past 30 years”, from 1980 to 2010. The simple observation I’ve been making for the past 18 months is that the University of Sydney’s under-supervised scientists have presented no valid evidence for their always-unlikely claim. When I say "valid", I mean "not falsified".

In July, I was incensed to see that JBM and AWB still concede nothing, still say their paper is flawless. In their latest unreasonable defence of their faulty paper, they state: “In 2011, Barclay and Brand-Miller reported three separate lines of evidence indicating downward trends in added sugars intake over the same timeframe that the prevalence of overweight and obesity among Australians had dramatically increased. We referred to this inverse relationship as the *Australian Paradox*.” (p. 11 of [http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-13-668.pdf](http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-13-668.pdf)).

As we already have seen, one of those “three separate lines of evidence” is JBM and AWB’s incompetent analysis of sugary softdrink sales. Sorry, the analysis doesn’t get better. My summary of the suite of graphical evidence is as follows:

- **Bizarrely, the upward trends in Figures 1, 2, 3, 4 and 4a** - charts published by JBM and AWB and reproduced above – all contradict rather than support the claim of “a consistent and substantial decline” in sugar intake.
- **So too do the upward trends in Figures 5 and 11.** The former measure, ironically, was commissioned, funded and “framed” by the University of Sydney’s low-GI business partner, the Australian sugar industry, while the latter measure was produced by UWA researchers – including a 30-year veteran of the ABS - attacking JBM and AWB’s nonsense-based paper: [http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-13-668.pdf](http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-13-668.pdf)
- **Again, the short series of readings at zero kilograms per person per year in my Figure 6a collapses JBM and AWB’s defence of their super-lightweight analysis in Figure 6** (see the final paragraph in the previous link).
- **The remarkably flat line-segments in Figures 7-10 reflect falsified data**, an anathema to competent scientists. Again, in this matter the University of Sydney and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have revealed themselves to be outrageously unreliable sources of dietary information: [http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/FAOfalsifiedsugar.pdf](http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/FAOfalsifiedsugar.pdf)

Yes, what a debacle! Three “lines of evidence”. Each of them unsupportive. None for three. Oops! The paper would never have been published in a real journal with real quality-control. Errors aplenty but JBM and AWB absolutely refuse to correct or retract the spectacularly faulty paper; they continue to insist in their paper that sugar and sugary drinks are
innocent of anything to do with obesity. In a world full of populations fuelled by sugar and trending towards obesity and type-2 diabetes, this is an outrage: http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/33/11/2477.full.pdf

Looking East, there may already be “up to 113.9 million Chinese adults with diabetes and 493.4 million with prediabetes” - and those figures too are trending up not down! http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1734701 Notably, a chart produced by the Reserve Bank of Australia inadvertently highlights sugar as a key driver of China’s growing public-health disaster: http://www.australianparadox.com/part-2

Readers, I challenge you to show me a less competent or more reckless paper either published or self-published by a Australian professor of science at a Group of Eight university. Accordingly, I’ll continue to argue near and far for the correction or retraction of the self-published Australian Paradox paper. I have written to the journal, interacted with the authors online and written repeatedly to the University of Sydney’s senior management about my detailed concerns.


Readers, while few are brutally honest and choose to use the words “scientific fraud” or “research misconduct", my observation that the Australian Paradox “finding” is incorrect has been confirmed publicly by a range of observers:

- Dr Rosemary Stanton observed in 2012, “And yes, I agree with you [Rory] that we have no evidence that sugar consumption in Australia has fallen”; “I have many objections to that particular paper and to the idea that sugar is not a problem”; and “I have expressed my opinion about the paper to the authors...I will almost certainly cite it at some stage as an example of something I consider to be incorrect”: Slide 18 in http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/22Slideshowaustraliangoestoparadoxcanberrafinal.pdf

- Professor Boyd Swinburn, “...says the study's summary of the data ...belie the facts 'and is a serious over-call in my opinion'... ‘the ecological trends of sugar and obesity are pretty well matched and I do not believe there is any paradox to explain” http://www.smh.com.au/national/health/research-causes-stir-over-sugars-role-in-obesity-20120330-1w3e5.html#ixzz2CJqOjTFu

- In July 2013, five University of Western Australia (UWA) researchers - including a 30-year veteran of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) – confirmed in a “peer reviewed” journal that the Australian Paradox claim has no serious basis in fact: http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-13-668.pdf

Again, in my opinion, JBM and AWB’s nonsense-based defence of their spectacularly faulty Australian Paradox paper has become a serious episode of “research misconduct”, as defined by the NHMRC, including, amongst other things: (i) “recklessness or gross and persistent negligence”; (ii) “serious consequences, such as false information on the public record”; and (iii) “failure to declare and manage serious conflicts of interest”: http://www.australianparadox.com/

Again, this Australian Paradox fraud has put a dark cloud over the competence and integrity of research to be produced at the University of Sydney's new $500 million Charles Perkins Centre for research into obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, even before it has opened its doors: http://www.smh.com.au/national/university-sets-up-500m-centre-for-obesity-research-20130724-2qgq8.html

Again, on retractions, MDPI CEO Dietrich Rordorf’s Nutrients journal claims to have “a zero tolerance policy” towards falsified data, yet so far Mr Rordorf and his editors have done nothing to correct the public record. Whatever happened to competence and integrity in science in “peer reviewed” journals and Group of Eight universities?

5. Laundry list of JBM and AWB’s faulty claims in the Australian Paradox fraud

(i) JBM and AWB claim: Rory Robertson’s critique of our Australian Paradox paper is wrong in part because cars not humans had been consuming up to “14 kg per capita per year” of the available sugar via ethanol production: p. 2 of http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/RESPONSE-TO-ROBERTSON.pdf

RR says: This clownish initial attempt to discredit my correct critique is unmistakable evidence that JBM and AWB either did not know what they are taking about or that they will go beyond what is reasonable to defend their spectacularly faulty paper. Either way, their self-published, nonsense-based paper should be corrected or retracted.
Despite being caught out on that carefully contrived yet absolutely false cars-are-eating-the-sugar claim, JBM and AWB rushed off to plonk *Australian Paradox Revisited* - their fluffy and false "rebuttal" of my correct critique - without addressing the fact that a range of indicators of sugar consumption in their own charts - Figures 1, 2, 3, 4 and 4a above - trend up not down. Nor in either *Australian Paradox* or *Australian Paradox Revisited* did they remark on the remarkable flat-lining FAO series that is falsified for the 2000s, as discussed above (Figures 7-9). And then there's Figure 6!!


(ii) **JBM and AWB state:** “Therefore, using only ABARE data [in Figure above], we can conclude that overall availability of refined sugar varied widely but shows no significant trend (p = 0.46) during a period when rates of obesity climbed dramatically” (p. 2 in [http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/nutrients-03-00491-s003.pdf](http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/nutrients-03-00491-s003.pdf)).

**RR says:** Again, the main finding of the *Australian Paradox* paper is very specific: “a consistent and substantial decline” in sugar consumption “over the past 30 years”, from 1980 to 2010. In Figure 1 (above), it is hard not to notice the steep upward trend in that timeframe. Any competent supervision of the University of Sydney’s under-supervised food-industry service providers would have restricted the discussion to the relevant timeframe, disallowing the disingenuous detour into the 1970s, a decade irrelevant in this discussion.

In any case, even “no significant trend” contradicts the false self-published claim of “a consistent and substantial decline”. How low does the quality of scholarship have to go at the University of Sydney before Group of Eight scientists out of their depth are dismissed for incompetence or for recklessly bringing publicly funded “science” into disrepute?

(iii) **JBM and AWB:** On Figure 1 in *Australian Paradox Revisited*, JBM and AWB suggest that apparent consumption statistics no longer are available for “any foodstuff, including sugar” (p. 3): [http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/nutrients-03-00491-s003.pdf](http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/nutrients-03-00491-s003.pdf)

**RR says:** That self-serving suggestion is mocked by Canberra’s ongoing publication of official estimates for easier-to-measure food and drink products, including beef, lamb, pork, poultry, butter, milk, cheese, beer and wine (see Tables 2.3 and Tables 2.4 at [http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/food/publications/afs](http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/food/publications/afs); also [http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4307.0.55.001](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4307.0.55.001/)).


(iv) **JBM and AWB state:** “In 2011, Barclay and Brand-Miller reported three separate lines of evidence indicating downward trends in added sugars intake over the same timeframe that the prevalence of overweight and obesity among Australians had dramatically increased. We referred to this inverse relationship as the *Australian Paradox.*” (p. 11 of [http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-13-668.pdf](http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-13-668.pdf)).

**RR says:** As discussed above, a feature of this growing scandal is JBM and AWB’s ongoing and unreasonable refusal to notice that their claimed “three lines of evidence” amount to the false claim that up is down (Figures 1-5) and that trivial is substantial (Figure 6 versus 6a), while recklessly embracing falsified data as fact (Figures 7-9).

And now JBM and AWB have turned up in July 2013 - in another journal - pretending that their spectacularly faulty paper is flawless. As discussed above, the *Australian Paradox* scandal has developed over the past 18 months into an obvious case of “research misconduct” as defined by the NHMRC: Sections 1-10 in [http://www.australianparadox.com/](http://www.australianparadox.com/)

Again, the obviously false original claim should never have been self-published, let alone disingenuously defended in two journals. The *Australian Paradox* paper would never have been published in a real journal with real quality control. It is unclear why the *Australian Paradox* journal has discredited itself by allowing JBM and AWB to publish further misrepresentations on this matter.

(v) **JBM and AWB state:** "Food industry data indicate that per capita sales of low calorie (non-nutrivelty sweetened) beverages doubled from 1994 to 2006 [correct] while nutritively sweetened beverages decreased by 10%” (*Australian Paradox*, p. 500).

**RR says:** Again, Figure 2 shows it’s up by 30%, from 35L to 45L. Yes, the claim that sugary softdrink sales "decreased by 10%" is an eye-popping published error, with JBM operating as "Guest Editor". Students of this scandal are aware that JBM and AWB got themselves tangled up between absolute levels and "market share" figures in the same sentence. That error would not have been published if anyone competent had read the paper before someone hit the "self-publish" button at MDPI’s *Nutrients* journal.
Can anyone think of a good reason why the University of Sydney’s unreliable and under-supervised authors should not immediately publish a formal correction of this blatant error alongside their initial formal Correction back on 9 August 2011? [http://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/3/8/734/]

(vi) JBM and AWB state: "Unfortunately, Rikkers et al. interpret the change in the volume of beverages as equivalent to change in sugar consumption, failing to recognise a decline in the concentration of added sugar in soft drinks” (p. 10).

RR says: Again, JBM and AWB confused a 30% increase in sales of sugary softdrinks with a 10% decrease. That’s hard to do in a “peer reviewed” paper. After haplessly confusing up with down - and then having no-one competent check their work before it was self-published – JBM and AWB now arrogantly are pretending that a 30-year veteran of the ABS and her four colleagues have not correctly identified obvious problems in their clownish Australian Paradox paper.

Let’s look at some basics. Before that 30% increase in sugary softdrink sales in Australia between 1994 and 2006, US experience suggests there was a steep upward trend between 1980 and 1994. Let’s be conservative and guess that sugary softdrink sales per person in Australia increased by a total of 50% between 1980 and 2010. Clearly, sugar consumption via sugary softdrinks did not decline substantially.

Indeed, it’s hard to think it did not increase substantially. Again, big-sellers Coca Cola, Sprite and Fanta all still have sugar contents in excess of 10%. And that 30% uptrend between 1994 and 2006 almost certainly was preceded by a similarly strong uptrend between 1980 and 1994. Sugar consumption via sugary softdrinks is up. Consumption of sugary milk is up. Consumption of sugary “energy drinks” is up. Obesity is up. What paradox?

In any case, JBM and AWB’s always-unlikely claim of "a consistent and substantial decline" in added sugar consumption between 1980 and 2010 is unsupported by the range of available information.

(vii) JBM and AWB state: "Manufacturers now sell soft drinks with as little as 3-5% sucrose vs 10-12% in the past. This critical information is not encapsulated by volume sales data, but by data on amounts of sugar used by the beverage industry (figure 6 in the Australian Paradox)” (p. 10).

RR says: Again, big-sellers Coca Cola, Sprite and Fanta all still have sugar contents in excess of 10%, as too do various big-selling “energy drinks”. Importantly, sales of diet softdrinks - the no-sugar versions – and bottled water are irrelevant for such calculations. And then there’s Figure 6!!!

AWB and JBM’s insistence that Figure 6 in Australian Paradox – reproduced as my Figure 6 above – indicates “a consistent and substantial decline” in per-capita sugar consumption is revealed as clownish when their supposedly really big tonnage figures are converted to “per person, per year” figures, as they are in my Figure 6a. Amusingly, JBM and AWB’s really big tonnage numbers in Figure 6 collapse to run along the X-axis at zero - zero - kg per person per year, collapsing the credibility of their Figure 6 in particular and their spectacularly faulty paper overall.

(viii) JBM and AWB state: “Overall, there was a decrease in sugar contribution from nutritively sweetened carbonated soft drinks to the Australian food supply, amounting to 12,402 tons (~600 g per person per year, Figure 6) from 2002 to 2006” (p.498).

RR says: Again, let’s review JBM and AWB’s talent with numbers. Yes, readers, again, that’s 12,402, 000,000 grams in total over four years, shared between some 20 million Australians. So, dividing by four, that’s roughly 3,000, 000,000 grams per annum shared between some 20, 000,000 of us. Cancel seven zeros and that’s ~300 grams per year between two people. That’s just ~150 g per person per year, not the self-published figure of “600 g per person per year”.

That blatant error is wrong only by a factor of four, but it must be corrected in the journal Nutrients if the University of Sydney wants to claim that competence and integrity have an important place in the Charles Perkins Centre, the new $500 million hub for the study of obesity and related maladies that soon is to be occupied by JBM and AWB.

(ix) JBM and AWB state: "FAOStat data for Australia are almost identical to ABS data until 1998–99 when reporting ceased (Figure 8), implying similar methodologies” (p. 9 of [http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-13-68.pdf]).

RR says: Similar methodologies! What nonsense. As discussed in Section 3 above, the FAO did not originate an Australian cane-sugar (sucrose) series before 1998-99. It essentially just “cut and pasted” the ABS series for several decades. After the ABS stopped counting, after 60 years, after 1998-99, the FAO falsified the data simply by writing down the final ABS number for several years. Hence the remarkably flat line in JBM and AWB’s preferred chart, reproduced above as my Figures 9 and 10.

To be clear, the FAO responded to the ABS no longer spoon-feeding it an Australian sugar series simply by pretending the series was flat. After several decades, the FAO’s first several published readings after the ABS stopped counting were
unchanged at the ABS’s data-dead-end figure of “37 kg. per cap”: second paragraph at http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/FAOfalsifiedsugar.pdf

(x) JBM and AWB state: “The most recent FAOstat data for Australia show that sugar availability has continued to decline (Figure 8)” (p. 9 http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-13-668.pdf).

RR says: Again, this is nonsense. Again, there are no real data for the 2000s, only falsified flatlining figures that the FAO made up on the basis of nothing, in order to avoid what would have been an unsightly hole - n.a. - in its dataset.

The fact that JBM and AWB continue to embrace clearly falsified data as fact is evidence of “persistent negligence” or worse. Either way, as discussed above, the University of Sydney in my opinion is in breach of the NHMRC’s Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

(xi) JBM and AWB state: “Although the data for the 4-year period 1999–2003 now appear to have been underestimated”: p. 10 of 11 at http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-13-668.pdf

RR says: Not underestimated. Falsified. One key aspects of the Australian Paradox scandal since early 2012 is how/why our overconfident scientists didn’t notice the conspicuously flat green line in Figures 9 and 10 above. That line segment was always remarkably flat. It was always obviously falsified by the FAO, after the ABS stopped spoon-feeding it sugar data after 1998-99. There never was a real sugar series for 2000-2003, yet that remarkable flat line went “unnoticed” and unremarked in the original paper and in Australian Paradox Revisited, JBM and AWB’s second fluffy and unreasonable defence of the “shonky sugar study”. Finally forced to discuss that falsified 1999-2003 segment, the underperforming authors choose to keep insisting that their clownish paper is flawless. Extraordinary. These are scientists?

(xii) JBM and AWB state: ”The Green Pool analysis concluded that apparent consumption of sugar declined from 1980–2011, i.e., a conclusion that is similar to the most recent FAOstat data” (p. 9 again).

RR says: Again, the FAO sugar series for Australia is falsified - and so is invalid - over the 2000s. There are no real data for the 2000s. The FAO series is a hoax. Moreover, again, the sugar industry’s “independent” Green Pool sugar series in Figure 5, above, shows sugar consumption to be flat-to-up over the past quarter-century, again contradicting JBM and AWB’s faulty claim of “a consistent and substantial decline”: http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/JBM-AWB-AustralianParadox.pdf

(xiii) JBM and AWB claim: “...a new independent review of Australian’s [sic] sugar consumption indicates that it is still continuing to decline”: http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/JBM-AWB-AustralianParadox.pdf

RR says: Again, the claim is flagrantly false: Figure 5 shows that the ABS/Green Pool consumption series is flat-to-up over the past quarter-century, contradicting the claim of “a consistent and substantial decline”.

Similarly, JBM and AWB’s claim that the sugar industry’s support via its commissioned, funded and “framed” Green Pool series is “independent” is rather slippery. In the late-2000s, the University of Sydney’s low-GI business helped CSR produce a new brand of sugar: http://www.logicane.com/Partners

Moreover, the University of Sydney operates a low-GI business stamping sugar and sugary products as Healthy. Again, the University of Sydney’s Glycemic Index (GI) operation - separating “good” foods and beverages (good = low GI = 55 and under) from “bad” (bad = high GI = over 55) - suggests that GI=53 Coca Cola is a good food: search for coca cola in http://www.glycemicindex.com/foodSearch.php

The University of Sydney’s GI methodology likes Coca Cola and, in turn, Coca Cola really likes the Australian Paradox paper: http://www.smh.com.au/national/health/researchcauses-stir-over-sugars-role-in-obesity-20120330-1w3e5.html

So much so that it was keen to sponsor AWB getting the good word out about the spectacularly faulty Australian Paradox “finding” (first 10 seconds): http://www.livepositively.com.au/Webinar?id=5

Of course, if your food product is high GI then the University of Sydney for up to $6000 a pop can add super-low GI=19 fructose - the “sweet poison” half of table sugar - to make it low GI and "Healthy": p. 5 at http://www.foodhealthdialogue.gov.au/internet/foodandhealth/publishing.nsf/Content/DS9B2C8391006638CA2578E60834BBD/$File/Resources%20and%20support%20for%20reformulation%20activities.pdf (if the link doesn't work, google "barclay glycemic reformulating") and pp. 10-11 at http://www.gisymbol.com.au/cmsAdmin/uploads/Glycemic-Index-Foundation-Healthy-Choices-Brochure.pdf

Yes, the University of Sydney’s high-profile food-industry service providers and the sugar and sugary food industries are completely independent!

The fact that fructose – the “sweet poison” half of table sugar – is super-low GI=19 is the fundamental flaw of the Glycemic Index approach to nutrition: http://www.diabetes.co.uk/diabetes-forum/viewtopic.php?f=18&t=30245
As an aside, readers should be aware that the Australian sugar industry’s commissioned, funded and “framed” Green Pool sugar series is basically a joke series, with the industry having disingenuously dug up the deceased ABS methodology long abandoned as unreliable. As noted by Green Pool, " Virtually all factors have largely been left as per ABS calculation, since an update of all data would require a large scale study of both the composition of imports of food into Australia and representative food compositional data for imports and exports of all categories - which is no longer collected by ABS” (p.3). Nailing a dead parrot back on its perch is okay, but Monty Python did it better: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ClrBMt4eiRk ; http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/New-nonsense-based-sugarreport.pdf 

(xiv) JBM and AWB state: "Rikkers et al. claim that the Australian Paradox is based on incomplete data because the sources utilised did not incorporate estimates for imported processed foods. This assertion is incorrect. Indeed, national nutrition surveys, sugar consumption data from the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAOstat), the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Australian beverage industry data all incorporated data on imported products" (p.10).

RR says: JBM and AWB are correct in saying that national nutrition surveys, ABS data and softdrink sales figures capture imported sugar alongside domestically produced sugar. But again JBM and AWB are hopelessly wrong on the FAO data; again, the falsified FAO series in the 2000s does not incorporate any new estimate for imported sugar via processed products. Again, the FAO numbers flat-line over 1999-2002 because the FAO simply wrote down the ABS figure for 1999 year after year while pretending it was doing something more reasonable. Again, I do not know why the BMC Public Health journal gave JBM and AWB an undeserved free-kick by allowing them to publish false information again, again without anyone competent correcting the nonsense they are retailing.

To be clear, the FAO essentially "cut and pasted" the ABS series until 1998-99. After that, for the 2000s, the FAO falsified its Australian sugar series. The FAO pretended it had real data when it did not. It had no real figures for imports of sugar because, with our sugar imports already embedded in tens of thousands of processed food and drink products, the FAO had neither the ability nor the resources required to count our imported sugar.

After all, the FAO is part of the United Nations and the UN’s main priority is helping the starving children of Africa, not counting Aussie sugar. Since the UN’s FAO was never going to devote sufficient resources to properly measuring Australian sugar imports in processed foods, it should have put "not available" in the empty cells for the 2000s, rather than unreasonably just making stuff up (see earlier FAOfalsifiedlink).

Importantly, in Figure 11, Rikkers et al have produced estimates of the volumes of sugar imported into Australia via processed food and drink products. And those estimates show per-capita imports of sugar trending steeply up from not down over the 1988-2010 timeframe. Yet again, the evidence contradicts the Australian Paradox claim. (Note that exports of sugar via processed products are relatively small; at around 2-3kg per person per year they largely are irrelevant.)

By definition: Apparent consumption of sugar ~ Sugar availability (production-imports)+ (net) Imports – “Leakages”; So, Apparent consumption of sugar = Figure 1 (upward sloping) + Figure 11 (upward sloping) – “Leakages” (flat)

On leakages, the best we can do - as the ABS used to do - is assume they are flat over time. Flat over time is a reasonable assumption because when AWB and JBM searched for leakages, their best effort - their claim that cars are consuming up to 14 kg pp pa of the available sugar via ethanol production - turned out to be either an inadvertent or deliberate hoax, much like Australian Paradox itself (http://www.smh.com.au/business/pesky-economist-wont-let-big-sugar-lie-20120725-22pru.html).

In any case, the calculation above boils down to: Figure 1 (upward sloping) plus Figure 11 (upward sloping) minus Leakages (flat), so overall we have an upward sloping line. By observation, that multi-part sugar series trends up not down. Yet again the Australian Paradox claim is contradicted.

(xv) JBM and AWB state: "Other limitations should be noted. In their analysis, Rikkers et al. were obliged to make assumptions about the cost of imported food items in order to derive an estimate of amount consumed. However, imported goods vary markedly in price depending on country of origin, but can be much more expensive than the local product (up to 10-fold more per litre in the case of soft drink)" (p. 9).

RR says: JBM and AWB’s clownish Australian Paradox and Australian Paradox Revisited pieces featured a complete lack of discussion about the absence of reliable data on sugar consumption over the 30 years to 2010. They did not mention to readers or independent reviewers (I) or editors that the ABS series ended in 1998-99, discontinued as unreliable in part because counting the grains of sugar in our modern food supply is a tough job.
That, JBM and AWB in their original paper said nothing about the extreme difficulty of reliably counting the refined sugar scattered - in grains not bags - throughout our food supply, by itself, told knowledgeable readers that they are lightweight on their own chosen special subject (Figure 10, above).

JBM and AWB still pretend to be unaware of the measurement issues – and the ABS data dead-end - that cratered the credibility of their self-published "finding" from the outset. Again, check out those conspicuously flat green lines in Figures 7-10 above and Slides 21 and 22 of http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/22Slideshowaustraliangoestoparadoxcanberrafinal.pdf

For anyone competent considering the obviously difficult measurement issues, counting the scattered grains not bags of sugar in sugary imports jumped out as a particular problem. After all, added sugar is almost ubiquitous in our modern food supply, and counting it properly is extraordinarily difficult. As an example of the measurement issues involved, how much sugar, if any, should analysts assume is in the $700m worth of "concentrates and beverage base" imported annually by one firm that sells sugary softdrinks and other beverages in Australia? (Note 32 and notes 3 and 4 on page 84 of 96 in http://ccamatil.com/InvestorRelations/Documents/CCA%202010%20annual%20report.pdf)

If we think kindly of them, one assumes that JBM and AWB had given none of this a thought, hadn't noticed that the ABS apparent consumption of sugar series had been discontinued as unreliable for a decade before Australian Paradox was written, or that their preferred FAO series flat-lines from 1998-99 because it is falsified. Recklessly unaware of the detail of their subject matter, JBM and AWB claim to have observed "a consistent and substantial decline" in added sugar consumption over the 30 years to 2010. Yet what valid data there are -- above - tend to point up not down.

Clueless about critical measurement issues when they self-published in 2011, it's amusing that JBM and AWB in 2013 are defending their hopeless analysis by arguing the toss about measurement issues, insisting their critics need to be aware of them! Talk about disingenuous. Sorry, but is that a hand that misleads one? Talk about disingenuous. Yet again, they insisted: "Although there were small increases in total sugars from 1983 to 1995 [for adults], there were sharper declines in 'sugary products' such as soft drinks that contribute refined sugar to the diet". Unfortunately for JBM and AWB's credibility as experts in this area, sugary softdrinks are not categorised as "sugary products" but are located in "Non-alcoholic beverages"(p. 1 in http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/RESPONSE-TO-ROBERTSON.pdf).

The problem today is that JBM and AWB refuse to understand and/or acknowledge that the category "Sugary products" is only a small subset of the total added sugar in our food supply. Moreover, as I have highlighted in various places: 'For children in Figure 4...the trend spanned by the point estimates from 1985 to 2007 is up not down for 'Total sugars', 'Sugary products', 'Confectionery', 'Non-alcoholic beverages' and the other large sugary category of 'Cereal-based products and dishes'. Yes, unambiguously, the post-1980 trend in sugars consumption for children is flat/up not down as obesity ballooned. Again, what Australian Paradox?' (see Figure 4a above and in Slide 17 at http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/22Slideshowaustraliangoestoparadoxcanberrafinal.pdf).

(xvii) JBM and AWB state: "National nutrition survey data, as cited in the Australian Paradox, provide the most precise data on food actually consumed" (p. 9).
RR says: Awkwardly, there are no national-nutrition data for adults since 1995, half of the relevant 1980 to 2010 timeframe. That is, national-nutrition data do not exist when it matters, let alone possess some special precision. In any case, as noted, the key charts - Figures 3, 4 and 4a above - all trend up not down, leaving JBM and AWB resorting to ham-fisted cherry-picking to contrive a supportive story that clearly is an unreasonable stretch of the available information: Section 6 in www.australianparadox.com

Again, the national nutrition surveys are hardly reliable snapshots. They are somewhat unreliable self-reported records from adults and/or children. (The nice lady is coming tomorrow to ask us about our diets, kids, so no lollies, icecream or softdrinks until Friday!) And a small but important point: JBM and AWB should not be drawing of solid lines between the available snapshots, given the changes in methodology between surveys, especially those for the 2007 survey of children.

(xviii) AWB and JBM claim: "Thankfully, reliable data on the intake of added sugars by Australians will be generated by the 2011–12 National Nutrition Survey due for release later this year [2013]" (p.9).

RR says: That will be good. But there is nothing that the ABS can publish in 2013 that will change the fact that JBM and AWB in 2011 self-published an incompetent assessment of the facts, and since then have fraudulently defended their spectacularly false Australian Paradox findings. Again, the valid data tend to point up not down, while the key FAO series is based on an ABS series that was discontinued as unreliable by the ABS and after 1998-99 is falsified by the FAO.

(xix) AWB and JBM claim: “Fructose Was Not ‘Scarce’ ” is a heading covering a whole section in Australian Paradox Revisited http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/nutrients-03-00491-s003.pdf

RR says: JBM and AWB embarrass themselves (further) by arguing that, in fact, “Fructose Was Not 'Scarce'“ in Australia in pre-European times. One can barely believe they are serious in making this ludicrous claim. Australians way back then reportedly gorged on local delicacies “including sugarbag (bush honey) and dried bush fruits, such as the bush tomato Solanum centrale containing 80% sugars”. Not to mention sugar ants: http://bushtuckerman.com.au/honey-ants/

Meanwhile, back then in Europe, the poor were not really poor at all because owning honey factories was much more common than you might think: "Apiculture, the art of raising bees, was widely practiced even by the poor. Indeed at certain times in history, consumption of honey may well rivalled our current consumption of refined sugar” (p. 4). Yes, of course, the advent of commercial farming of sugar cane, sugar beet and corn – not to mention commercial farming of fruit and honey - probably has boosted only marginally an everyday human’s access to fructose. Sure. Of course we are not eating unnaturally high doses today! Oh dear. These are scientists?

Finally, this RBA chart - http://www.australianparadox.com/part-2 - suggests that JBM and AWB understate the average human’s access to fructose – today versus (say) three centuries ago - by many multiples. I challenge them to spend a week fossicking around Centennial Park – just across the way from the University of Sydney - and report back on their success in seeking the nearly 60 grams of fructose per day on average that the sugar industry says we now are eating (that is, 59 grams times 365 days times two - to convert from fructose to refined sugar - equals 43kg per annum), and that’s before we start counting the fructose consumed via commercially produced fruit juice, fruit and honey.

6. Motivation: Why I am making such a fuss

Readers, after 18 months, I am angry about the lengths I have had to go to encourage the University of Sydney to do what is right, to do what it should have done without any prodding from me. I am angry about the lengths I have had to go to push the University of Sydney towards correcting or retracting a spectacularly faulty self-published paper. I am angry about the lengths I have had to go to push the University of Sydney towards correcting or retracting a spectacularly faulty self-published paper that recklessly seeks to exonerate harmful sugary softdrinks as a menace to public health.

To be clear about my motivations, this all matters because modern rates of sugar consumption - including via sugary drinks - are a key driver of global obesity and type 2 diabetes, together the greatest public-health challenge of our times: http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/33/11/2477.full.pdf

To be clear about my motivations, I also am arguing near and far for a ban on all sugary drinks in all schools in all nations: http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Sugary-Drinks-Ban.pdf

To be clear about my motivations, I am concerned that outsized rates of sugar consumption – alongside alcohol and tobacco – are a major driver of the unacceptable “gap” in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians: see the bottom row of Box/Table 2 in https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2013/198/7/characteristics-community-level-diet-aboriginalpeople-remote-northern-australia

To be clear about my motivations, I think it is a disgrace that JBM and AWB are set to move into the Charles Perkins Centre, when they have devoted themselves to (falsely) exonerating as harmless the very substance that is fuelling the
obesity, type-2 diabetes, heart disease and related miseries that are killing the health of Charles Perkins’s First Australians. The Hippocratic Oath should be as relevant for nutrition “science” as for medical science: First, do no harm.

So, again, here’s my proposed Retraction Notice, first posted in a discussion with MDPI CEO Dietrich Rordorf:

**Abstract:** It has been brought to our attention by a reader of Nutrients that the conclusion of “a consistent and substantial decline” in per-capita sugar consumption between 1980 and 2010 in “The Australian Paradox: A Substantial Decline in Sugars Intake over the Same Timeframe that Overweight and Obesity Have Increased” is based in part on a data series that was falsified by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). MDPI has a strict “zero tolerance policy” towards the use of falsified data, whether the authors were aware of the invalidity of the data or not. Moreover, there are further major errors and misinterpretations that collapse the credibility of the manuscript’s conclusion of “an inverse relationship” between sugar intake and obesity. For example, it turns out that the authors’ own chart suggests that the intake of sugar via softdrinks increased as obesity bulged between 1980 and 2010. Unfortunately, that observation removes a central element of the authors’ claimed “paradox”. The authors’ business links to the sugar and sugary food industries also are somewhat unsettling. Taking public-health considerations into account – particularly evidence that excessive sugar consumption is a major contributor to global obesity and type 2 diabetes, together the greatest public-health challenge of our times: http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/33/11/2477.full.pdf – the Editorial Team and Publisher have determined that this manuscript should be retracted. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

http://retractionwatch.wordpress.com/2013/08/22/journal-to-feature-special-issue-on-scientific-misconduct-seeks-submissions/

Readers, this slowly inflating Australian Paradox scandal looks to feature scientific fraud along the lines undertaken by the fictional “Professor Sydney Nutrition”: Slides 43 and 44 at http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/AUSTRALIAN-PARADOX-101-SLIDESHOW.pdf

Outrageously, the authors continue to ignore the readily available facts – in their own charts! – and instead claim – via a University of Sydney website – that they have made no errors, that their faulty paper is flawless and that Rory Robertson is incompetent in this matter:

> “Unfortunately, there are factual errors in the economist’s arguments, and misinterpretation of the distinctions between total sugars vs. refined sugars, sugar availability vs. apparent consumption, sugar-sweetened and diet soft drinks, and other nutrition information”: http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/JBM-AWB-AustralianParadox.pdf via http://www.glycemicindex.com/

Of course, I have made no such errors. Critically, the authors have documented no such errors. So where are we left? Well, one simple definition of fraud is “intentional deception made for personal gain or to damage another individual”: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fraud

In my opinion, the University of Sydney scientists have chosen to bolster their credibility and careers at the expense of mine; they’ve chosen not to correct their errors and misrepresentations documented in Sections 2-5 above in order to limit the damage to their reputations, in the process maximising the damage to mine. Their approach thus fits neatly that simple definition of fraud.

Disturbingly, in the year or so since I correctly advised University of Sydney Vice-Chancellor Spence about the serious problems in his nutrition “science” area - Section 8 in http://www.australianparadox.com/ - he has allowed his unreliable and under-supervised staff to falsely trash my reputation via a University of Sydney website. Indeed, in November 2012, one of Vice-Chancellor Spence’s “scientists” came online to describe me as a criminal “Troll”: p. 2 of http://www.australianparadox.com/pdf/Update-AustralianParadox-Dec2012-27.pdf

Again, this is outrageous, and has made me all the more determined to find out who is going to take responsibility for the lack of quality control and integrity in science at the University of Sydney. Importantly, the Australian Paradox fraud is not a fraud because JBM and AWB self-published an incompetent assessment of the available information. The problem is their ongoing and determined refusal to acknowledge and correct the various errors and misrepresentations – both small and large - that I’ve documented again in great detail in Sections 2-5 above.

In my opinion, it is unreasonable for JBM and AWB to keep defending the indefensible, to keep pretending that the spectacularly faulty Australian Paradox paper is flawless. For 18 months, they have been well aware of the serious flaws in their paper: http://www.smh.com.au/business/economist-v-nutritionists-big-sugar-and-lowgi-brigade-lose-20120307-1uj6u.html

Again, this clearly is an example of research misconduct, as defined by the NHMRC: Sections 1-10 of http://www.australianparadox.com/

Looking at international experience, deep links between universities and the sugar industry have a poor record in terms of improving scientific integrity and public health. In the US, "Big Sugar" set out in the 1950s to scramble and mislead science on the links between modern sugar consumption and chronic diseases. On the way, Harvard University in the 1960s and 1970s became America's "most public defender" of "modern sugar consumption" as harmless, its "science" reportedly corrupted by heavy funding from the sugar and sugary food industries: [http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2012/10/sugar](http://www.motherjones.com/environment/2012/10/sugar)

JBM and AWB’s *Australian Paradox* “findings” are hopelessly wrong, based as they are on confusion between up and down in simple charts, and falsified FAO data. Outrageously, their pre-determined policy conclusion – sugary drinks are innocent - is recklessly wrong, according to such notables as the Heart Foundation, Cancer Council and Diabetes Australia: [http://www.rethinksugarydrink.org.au/](http://www.rethinksugarydrink.org.au/)

This is all very disturbing. The faulty *Australian Paradox* paper should be corrected or retracted without further unreasonable delay, to remove serious and somewhat dangerous misinformation from the scientific record.

Readers, if you got this far – yes, I plead guilty to being long-winded - I hope you have enjoyed my detailed explanation of the University of Sydney’s *Australian Paradox* fraud. At least my proposed Retraction Notice is short and sweet.

If you simply stumbled into this discussion but agree that I have identified a serious problem with research integrity, why not make a fuss about it in a small way: perhaps highlighting the issue by asking those you know at the University of Sydney - or elsewhere in science and/or public health - what should be done. If you are a scientist at the University of Sydney and you too are outraged about all this, please show your colleagues and make a bigger fuss.

If you are University of Sydney Vice-Chancellor Dr Michael Spence, Professor Jill Trewella – in charge of the University’s research integrity! - or MDPI CEO Mr Dietrich Rordorf, you have a problem. Your growing problem is that these are the facts and the facts tell a very smelly story. My guess you’ll keep pretending there is no problem. Good luck with that. If you don’t fix it now, you’ll have to fix it later: the facts are not going away and in the meantime the scandal is slowly inflating.

In any case, I’ll keep chipping away as best I can, seeking the correction or retraction of the outrageously faulty paper that the University of Sydney uses to “exonerate” harmful sugar and sugary drinks as a menace to public health while, for up to $6000 a pop, the University of Sydney’s GI business stamps particular brands of sugar and sugary products as Healthy.


7. Sunlight is the best disinfectant: The University of Sydney’s *Australian Paradox* fraud out into the fresh air

On top of my contributions on Retraction Watch, I have taken the time to discuss the *Australian Paradox* fraud “live” on the Australian universities’ joint-venture website, *The Conversation*:

- [https://theconversation.com/how-we-deal-with-alleged-research-misconduct-nhmrc-17101#comment_203994](https://theconversation.com/how-we-deal-with-alleged-research-misconduct-nhmrc-17101#comment_203994)
- [https://theconversation.com/from-fraud-to-fair-play-australia-must-support-research-integrity-15733](https://theconversation.com/from-fraud-to-fair-play-australia-must-support-research-integrity-15733)
- [https://theconversation.com/an-insiders-account-of-the-human-genome-project-13040](https://theconversation.com/an-insiders-account-of-the-human-genome-project-13040); and

If you have read carefully my detailed analysis in this piece and you strongly disagree or agree with anything I have written, I encourage you to have your say in those public fora. That’s particularly the case if you are Professor Jennie Brand-Miller, Dr Alan Barclay, University of Sydney Vice-Chancellor Dr Michael Spence or Professor Jill Trewella.

If the University of Sydney as an entity thinks that my observation of scientific fraud is incorrect or somehow unreasonable, please come on line and explain why that is the case. If not, and the problems I have been highlighting for the past 18 months now seem obvious, as they do, please correct or retract your reckless *Australian Paradox* paper without further unreasonable delay.

End.

Comments, corrections, questions, compliments, whatever welcome at strathburnstation@gmail.com