

Australia: Kids' exposure to junk food ads unchanged despite regulations

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Children still see as much fast food advertising as they did before industry self-regulation.

(Medical Xpress) -- Children's exposure to television advertising for unhealthy fast food has remained unchanged since the introduction of industry self-regulation, according to new research from the University of Sydney.

The research, led by dietician Lana Hebden and published in the [Medical Journal of Australia](#) today, analysed all TV ads broadcast during a four-day sample period, in both May 2009 and April 2010.

The Australian Quick Service Restaurant Industry (QSRI) Initiative for Responsible Advertising and Marketing to Children is a self-regulatory initiative which began in August 2009, and has several signatories that include McDonald's, KFC and Pizza Hut.

The study, which compared a period before (May

2009) and after (April 2010) the introduction of the QSRI initiative, found that the mean frequency of fast food ads significantly increased over the study period, from 1.1 per hour in 2009 to 1.5 per hour in 2010.

The frequency of ads for unhealthy fast foods remained unchanged (one per hour) overall, and during kids' peak viewing times (1.3 per hour).

The authors called for greater [government regulation](#) of fast [food advertising](#), particularly as research shows that kids' exposure to these ads negatively influences their food intake.

"The limited impact of self-regulation suggests that governments should define the policy framework for regulating fast-food advertising," they wrote.

Provided by University of Sydney

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