

Link between food advertising and child food consumption

25 January 2016

New research by University of Liverpool health expert Dr Emma Boyland has confirmed that unhealthy food advertising does increase food intake in children.

Researchers, led by Dr Boyland from the University's Institute of Psychology, Health & Society, reviewed and analysed 22 separate studies that had examined the impact of acute, experimental unhealthy [food advertising](#) exposure on food consumption. The studies included had exposed children and/or adults to [unhealthy food](#) advertising on the television or Internet, measured how much they ate, and compared this to the amount people ate without food advertising.

The analysis showed that unhealthy food advertising exposure significantly increased food consumption in children, but not adults. Television and Internet advertising were equally impactful.

Dr Boyland, said: "Through our analysis of these published studies I have shown that food advertising doesn't just affect brand preference - it drives consumption. Given that almost all children in Westernised societies are exposed to large amounts of unhealthy food advertising on a daily basis this is a real concern.

"Small, but cumulative increases in energy intake have resulted in the current global childhood obesity epidemic and food marketing plays a critical role in this. We have also shown that the effects are not confined to TV advertising; online marketing by food and beverage brands is now well established and has a similar impact.

"On the basis of these findings, recommendations for enacting environmental strategies and policy options to reduce [children's](#) exposure to food advertising are evidence-based and warranted."

The study has been published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

More information: E. J. Boyland et al. Advertising as a cue to consume: a systematic review and meta-analysis of the effects of acute exposure to unhealthy food and nonalcoholic beverage advertising on intake in children and adults, *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (2016). DOI: [10.3945/ajcn.115.120022](https://doi.org/10.3945/ajcn.115.120022)

Provided by University of Liverpool

APA citation: Link between food advertising and child food consumption (2016, January 25) retrieved 6 September 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-01-link-food-advertising-child-consumption.html>

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