

Food and Beverage Cues in Childrens' Television Programmes - The Influence of Programme Genre

ABSTRACT

The link between childhood obesity and both television viewing and television advertising have previously been examined. We sought to investigate the frequency and type of food and beverage placements in children-specific television broadcasts and, in particular, differences between programme genres.

The content of five weekdays of children-specific television broadcasting on both UK (BBC) and Irish (RTÉ) television channels was summarised. Food and beverage placements were coded based on type of product, product placement, product use and characters involved. A comparison was made between different programme genres: animated, cartoon, child-specific, film, quiz, tween and young persons' programming.

A total of 1,155 (BBC=450; RTE=705) cues were recorded giving a cue every 4.2 minutes, an average of 12.3 s/cue. The genre with most cues recorded was cartoon programming (30.8%). For the majority of genres, cues related to sweet snacks (range 1.8-23.3%) and sweets/candy (range 3.6-25.8%) featured highly. Fast food (18.0%) and sugar-sweetened beverage (42.3%) cues were observed in a high proportion of tween programming. Celebratory/social motivation factors (range 10-40%) were most common across all genres while there were low proportions of cues based on reward, punishment or health-related motivating factors.

The study provides evidence for the prominence of energy-dense/nutrient-poor foods and beverages in childrens' programming. Of particular interest is the high prevalence of fast-food and sugar-sweetened beverage cues associated with tween programming. These results further emphasize the need for programme makers to provide a healthier image of foods and beverages in childrens' television.

SOURCE

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