Monitoring Food Marketing to Children: An INFORMAS Driven Approach

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April 29, 2021
TODAY

- Importance of monitoring M2K
- Previous INFORMAS work monitoring food marketing
- INFORMAS research plans
Importance of monitoring M2K
Health Impact of Food Marketing

Food and beverage marketing has been associated with

- Food preferences
- Short-term food intake
- Food requests
- Childhood obesity

Food marketing is a BIG problem in Canada.
Why do we need to monitor M2K?

- Benchmark current levels of food marketing
- Helps evaluate current policies and identify gaps
  - *Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative*
  - *Consumer Protection Act in Quebec*
- Informs the development of future policies
- Provides the baseline for future policy evaluation
- To enable international comparisons
Global benchmarking of children's exposure to television advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages across 22 countries

Research Questions

- What is children’s estimated exposure to unhealthy food advertising on TV?
- What is the potential impact of M2K policy interventions?
- What is the influence of international food trade and investment on food ad exposure?
Methodology

- Data contributed by 22 countries
- No limit on year of data collection (2012-2017)
- Number of channels varied
- Age of children varied

Asia Pacific
- American Samoa
- Australia
- China
- Fiji
- Malaysia
- New Caledonia
- New Zealand
- Samoa
- Thailand
- Tonga

Africa
- South Africa

Central/South America
- Argentina
- Chile
- Columbia
- Costa Rica
- Guatemala
- Mexico

North America
- Canada

Europe
- Malta
- Slovenia
- Spain
- UK (#1)
- UK (#2)
Methodology

- Datasets on food advertising included if:
  - All food categories captured
  - Info on time food ad was shown
  - At least one weekday/one weekend day, preferably randomly selected
  - Sufficient detail to allow classification of healthfulness of product
- Policy context of each country captured
  - Self-regulatory
  - Statutory
  - Co-regulation
  - None
Methodology: CANADA

- CANADA: followed INFORMAS protocol
  - 2 weekdays/2 weekends randomly selected (May/June 2017)
  - Top 3 children’s stations (as per Nielsen data)
  - Taped 18 hrs/day (6 am to midnight)
  - Children defined as aged 2-11 years

- Peak viewing times
  - Top 5-hour time slots based on maximum child audience for weekday and weekend
Classification of Food/Beverage Advertising

- Country, day, date, channel, time
- Brand name and food category type
- Parent company
- Use of marketing techniques
  - Promotional marketing characters
  - Premium offers
Healthfulness of Advertised Products

- Canadian website, NFt in stores, American website & Nutrient File
- All nutritional information was converted to a 100g serving size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving</th>
<th>Saturated fat</th>
<th>Carbohydrate</th>
<th>Protein</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories</td>
<td>Trans fat</td>
<td>Fibre</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total fat</td>
<td>Sodium</td>
<td>Sugars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHO Regional Office for Europe Nutrient Profile Model
- Permitted/not-permitted
- Threshold criteria per 100g
- Chocolate, candy, cakes, cookies, juices, energy drinks are never permitted
Average Frequency of Food Ads (Ads/Hr/Channel)

Overall: 4X more not-permitted food ads than permitted food ads.
Most Frequently Advertised Food Categories

OVERALL
- Other beverages (15%)
- Chocolate and candy (13%)
- Ready-made food/dishes (12%)
- Breakfast cereals (9%)
- Cakes, cookies, pastries (7%)

CANADA
- Breakfast cereals (31%)
- Chocolate and candy (22%)
- Cakes, cookies, pastries (14%)
- Ready-made food/dishes (13%)
- Cheese (9%)
Not-permitted Food Ads/Hr/Channel at Peak (top 5 hrs)/Other Viewing Times

Overall: ~35% more not-permitted food ads during peak viewing compared to other times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Peak Viewing</th>
<th>Other Viewing Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
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<td>Costa Rica</td>
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<td>Guatemala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>~35%</td>
<td>~20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<0.05
Percentage Contribution by Company to Global Not-Permitted Food Ads

- Ten companies contributed 40% of not permitted food ads.
- Nine of these companies were present across all markets.
Average Not-Permitted Food Ads/Hr/Channel in Peak Viewing Times by Policy Arrangement

![Bar chart showing average not permitted food ads/hour/channel in peak times for Co-reg/Govt reg, Self-regulation, and No policy policy arrangements. The chart indicates a statistically significant difference (*) with a p-value less than 0.0001. The chart suggests that the highest average not permitted food ads occur in the Co-reg/Govt reg policy arrangement.]
Conclusion

- Globally: levels of unhealthy food advertising are high
  - Canada fared the worst
- Significant % of unhealthy food ads stem from a small number of multinational companies
  - Foreign direct investment in developing markets
- Current policy environment
  - Self-regulation is NOT working in Canada or elsewhere
  - Current regulations NOT working well
    - Focus on children’s programming alone will have minimal impact
Current INFORMAS RESEARCH
WHO (2010)

“...the effectiveness of marketing is a function of exposure and power, the overall policy objective should be to reduce both the exposure of children to, and power of, marketing of foods high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars, or salt.”

Exposure

- Actual exposure
- Potential exposure
Focus on 3 Media and 2 Settings
Food and beverage marketing on television

- Marketing expenditures are highest (Numerator, 2019)

- Children and adolescents watch between 14 to 17 h of television per week (CRTC, 2018)
Digital Food and Beverage Marketing

- Includes
  - Company/brand websites
  - Banner, pop-up, video ads on third party websites
  - E-mail ads
  - Company/brand apps
  - Push notifications from apps
  - Within App ads
  - SMS ads (texts)
  - Social media presence
  - Advertising by YouTube vloggers

- Multiple platforms
  - Desktop
  - Laptop
  - Tablet
  - Smartphones

Potvin Kent et al. (2018)
- Over 54 million food ads on top 10 child websites in Canada
- 93.4% categorized as excessive in fat, salt or free sugars as per the PAHO NPM
Packaging

- Signal et al., 2019
  - Kid-cam study in New Zealand
    - 4 days every 7 seconds
    - Child exposure was highest for product packaging; followed by outdoor signs
Marketing in Schools

• Children spend more than 180 days a year
• Potvin Kent et al. (2019)
  Most frequently reported forms of marketing
  • sale of branded food for fundraising (chocolate, pizza, and other fast food (64% of schools)
  • food advertisements on school property (26%)
  • participation in incentive programs (18%)

Forms of school marketing

• Appropriation of space (ads, displays, naming rights)
• Corporate sponsorship of programs, events or contests
• Exclusive marketing arrangements
• Incentive programs
• Sponsored educational materials
• Electronic marketing (TV or digital)
• Fundraising
Outdoor Advertising

- Outdoor advertising
  - Bill boards
  - Transit shelters,
  - Interior transit
  - Exterior bus
  - Phone booths
  - Outdoor benches
  - Superboards
  - Tunnel media
  - Bathroom interior and floor

Signal et al., 2019 Kid-cam study in New Zealand
- Child exposure was highest for product packaging; followed by outdoor signs
Numerator (2019
- 3rd highest marketing expenditures in Canada

Current study
- Sample areas within 40 population settings
- 250m and 500m around schools
Acknowledgements

- My co-authors in the INFORMAS study on TV benchmarking

- Marketing expenditure study team
  - Elise Pauzé, Lauren Remedios, Julia Soares Guimaraes, Adena Pinto, Mariangela Bagnato, Meghan Pritchard, Mary L’Abbé, Christine Mulligan, Laura Vergeer, & Madyson Weippert

- Health Canada
  - Drs. Lana Vanderlee, Mary L’Abbé

- CIHR