

"It's got adverts... Always, always there"

Jessica Newberry Le Vay^a, Nathan Critchlow^b, Andy MacGregor^c, Kaushi Attygalle^c, Jessica Shields^c, Jyotsna Vohra^a

^aCancer Research UK, London, United Kingdom

^bUniversity of Stirling, Stirling, United Kingdom

^cScotCen Social Research, Edinburgh United Kingdom

jessica.newberrylevay@cancer.org.uk

HOW DOES OBESITY IN CHILDHOOD AFFECT CANCER RISK AS AN ADULT?



A third of children leave primary school with obesity¹, which is an important risk factor for 13 types of cancer in adult life². This poster presents recent research by Cancer Research UK which explores how marketing is linked to consumption of high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) products among young people in the UK, with the aim of informing Government policy on how such marketing is regulated.

1 The 2017 Youth Obesity Policy Survey: Marketing and HFSS consumption in young people

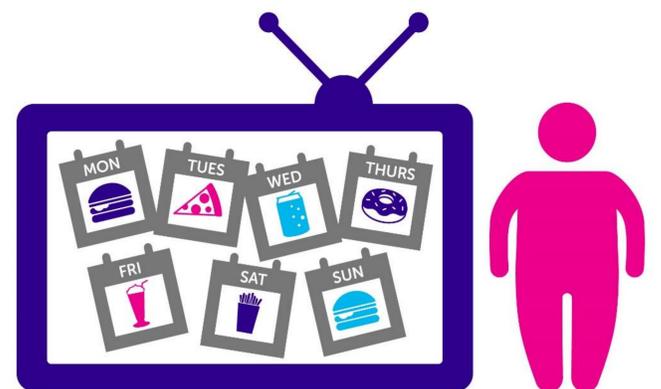
In 2017, we conducted a UK wide survey of 3,348 11-19 year olds. Participants were asked where, and how often, they see marketing for high fat salt sugar (HFSS) products, their screen time, how frequently they consume HFSS products, and whether they felt pressure to consume HFSS products. We found that:

- Young people reported they frequently consumed a range of HFSS products. Almost half (44%) agreed there was pressure on them to eat and drink unhealthily³

Seeing one extra broadcast advert per week predicts 60 extra HFSS items (18,000 calories) per year⁵

- Both exposure to marketing and screen time for commercial channels was consistently associated with higher consumption of HFSS products⁴
- Reduced exposure can benefit weight outcomes; young people were 70% less likely to be obese when recalling seeing junk food adverts less than once a week⁵

JUNK FOOD ADVERT RECALL IS ASSOCIATED WITH OBESITY



YOUNG PEOPLE WHO RECALLED SEEING JUNK FOOD ADVERTS EVERY DAY WERE MORE THAN TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE OBESE.

2 Still Under Pressure; But Pressing for Change

Focus groups with 11-19 year olds, conducted by ScotCen in 2019⁶, showed that:

- Young people feel HFSS marketing, particularly digital marketing, is pervasive. By using spaces associated with younger audiences, such as social media, young people feel this marketing is targeted to them
- Young people are concerned about the impact of HFSS marketing and are supportive of protective measures, such as time restrictions, restrictions on billboard and poster placement and for adverts to be more truthful in their depiction of products and their health impacts
- Other factors also influence young people's HFSS consumption such as cost, convenience, family and age

"I never see any "Eat your salad" advertisements, and young children are constantly surrounded by all of these junk ads, and they get in the habit of eating it."

3 The 2019 Youth Obesity Policy Survey: What we are doing next

To help build a long term picture of HFSS consumption and marketing, we will be repeating our UK wide survey of 11-19 year olds again in 2019. We will be repeating many measures from the wave one, but will also include new questions on digital media use and engagement, social norms, and attitudes towards policy. These updated questions incorporate the findings of the focus groups. The key themes we will look at are:

- Trends over time: comparing 2017 and 2019 cross-sectional data
- Social norms around HFSS consumption
- Influence of and perceptions towards food and drink packaging and advertising
- Young people's support for policy change which could reduce exposure to HFSS marketing

Findings will be published in early 2020.

Talk to me about: your research and policy priorities

References

- [1] HM Government, "Childhood obesity: A plan for action, Chapter 2," HM Government, London, 2018.
- [2] K. Brown, H. Rumgay, C. Dunlop, M. Ryan, F. Quartly, A. Cox, A. E.-B. L. Deas, A. H. L. Gavin, D. Huws, N. Ormiston-Smith, J. Shelton, C. White and D. Parkin, "The fraction of cancer attributable to modifiable risk factors in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the United Kingdom in 2015," British Journal of Cancer, vol. 118, pp. 1130-1141, 2018.
- [3] C. Thomas, L. Hooper, G. Rosenberg, F. Thomas and J. Vohra, "Under pressure: New evidence on young people's broadcast marketing exposure in the UK," Cancer Policy Research Centre, Cancer Research UK, London, 2018.
- [4] C. Thomas, L. Hooper, R. T. F. Petty, G. Rosenberg and J. Vohra, "10 Years On: New evidence on TV marketing and junk food eating amongst 11-19 year olds 10 years after broadcast regulations," Cancer Policy Research Centre, Cancer Research UK, London, 2018.
- [5] F. Thomas, L. Hooper, R. Petty, C. Thomas, G. Rosenberg and J. Vohra, "A prime time for action: New evidence on the link between television and on-demand marketing and obesity," Cancer Policy Research Centre, Cancer Research UK, London, 2018.
- [6] A. MacGregor, K. Attygalle, J. Shields, J. Newberry Le Vay, E. Whiteside, M. Clark, J. Vohra, "Still Under Pressure; But Pressing for Change: Young people's perceptions of what influences their food choices and what changes they want to see," Cancer Research UK, London, 2019