

Nutritional Analysis: Food Advertising During Children's Television Programming in Nepal



Ashlie N. Johnson, BS, BA, Andrew D. Menger-Ogle, PhD, John A. Morgan, BS, Dan J. Graham, PhD
Colorado State University

Background and Objective

- Television advertising of foods to children has been criticized in recent decades by health advocates because:
 - a large proportion of the advertised foods are unhealthy.¹
 - children are more susceptible to advertising messages than adults.²
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has released an agenda for regulation agencies and food industry marketing with the aim of reducing the *exposure and power* of media messages that can lead children to less healthful diet choices.³
- Many appeal types are used to advertise to children.⁴ It is of interest to illuminate the different strategies used in global markets.
- Nepal, a low-income country in south Asia, is experiencing a *nutrition transition*, including a rise in obesity.⁵
- Much of programming in Nepal is sourced from India. It is of additional interest to explore the actual availability of marketed products in Nepal.

Objective was to discover:

What characterizes the TV food marketing landscape for children in Nepal.

Method

- 61 hours of **children's programming** were recorded across 20 days and 3 TV channels airing in **Nepal** but broadcasting from **India**
- Content analysis** on 12 hours of commercials, categorizing nutrition⁶ and marketing appeal type⁴
- Foods categorized via **inductive coding** based on regional salience
- Nutritional profiles** collected for available products and compared to recommendations set by The World Health Organization (WHO) and an Interagency Working Group (IWG)^{3,6}

Results

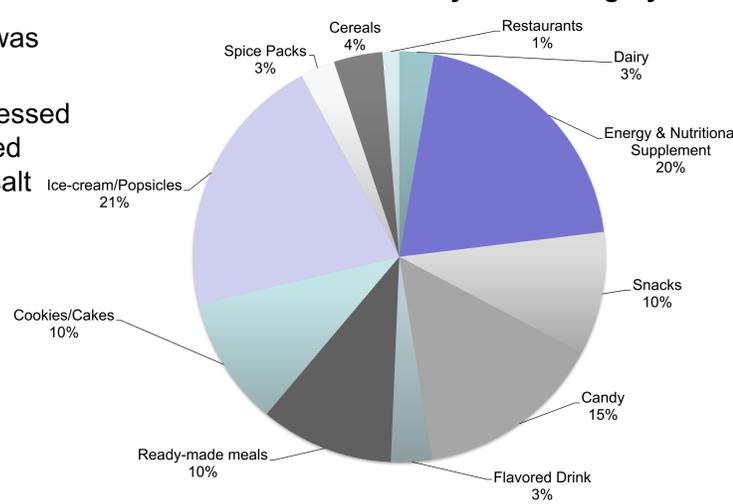
Categories and Nutritional Profiles:

- 54.5% of commercial time was devoted to food advertising
- Majority of foods were processed and exceeded recommended levels of sugar, fat, and/or salt

>80% of foods exceeded ≥1 recommendation by the IWG.

- Exceeded:
 - 1 recommendation = 76.8%,
 - 2 recommendations=4.6%
- Primarily **sugar**: over half (51.7%) of the products exceeded recommendations

Percent of Commercials by Food Category



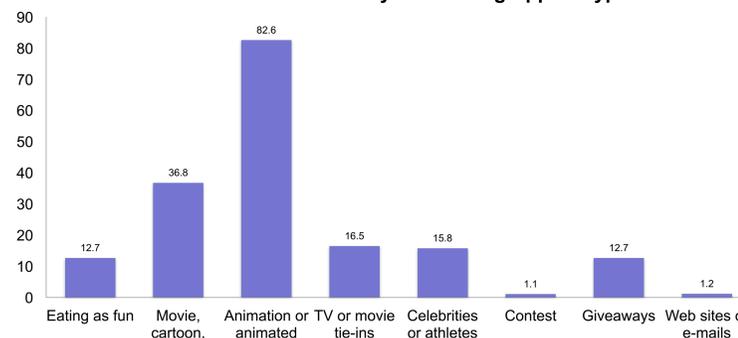
Nutrient	% of commercials exceeding recommendation (of those with known nutrient info)	% of commercials missing nutrient info
Saturated Fat	33.3%	32.7%
Trans Fat	0%	40.8%
Sugar	51.7%	6.8%
Sodium	18.8%	42%



Marketing Appeals and Audience:

- The majority of the commercials targeted either **children** (32.9%) or **children and adults** (38.4%), and used a variety of appeals with **animation** and animated effects being the most common.
- The primary actor (protagonist) of the commercials was typically male.
 - Male child= 33.7%
 - Male adult= 15.9%
 - Female adult=13.7%
 - Female child=12.1%
 - None=23.6%

Percent of Commercials by Advertising Appeal Types



Availability:

- Most of the products were widely available in Nepal (54.3%).
- However, some had to be purchased from specialty shops (35.4%) or were not available for purchase (10.2%)

Discussion

- Most TV ads in this Nepali sample do **not meet WHO recommendations** for advertising to children.
 - Most food advertisements (80%) **expose children to unhealthy products** that have too much sugar, fat, or sodium.
 - Most food advertisements (99.4%) use techniques (such as animation and animated effects) that the WHO identifies as being **highly powerful in their appeal** to child audiences.
- These Nepali ads were somewhat **gendered** in their primary character selection.
- Only 54% of the products featured were widely **available for purchase**.
- As food markets and marketing practices become more global, **nutrition transitions** in developing nations may result.
- The food media trends targeting Nepal's youth may foretell a **rise in less healthful diets** among the new generation.

References

- Kelly, B., Halford, J.C.G., Boyland, E., Chapman, K., Bautista-Castaño, I., Berg, C.,... & Summerbell, C. (2010). Television food advertising to children: A global perspective. *American Journal of Public Health, 100*(9), 1730-1736
- Kraak, V. A., & Story, M. (2015) Influence of food companies' brand mascots and entertainment companies' cartoon media characters on children's diet and health: A systematic review and research needs. *Obesity Reviews, 16*, 107-126
- World Health Organization. (2010). *Set of recommendations on the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children*. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/publications/recsmarketing/en/>
- Batada, A., Seitz, M. D., Wootan, M. G., & Story, M. (2008). Nine out of 10 food advertisements shown during Saturday morning children's television programming are foods high in fat, sodium, or added sugars, or low in nutrients. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association, 108*, 673-678.
- Popkin, B. M., Adair, L. S., & Ng, S. W. (2012). Global nutrition transition and the pandemic of obesity in developing countries. *Nutrition Reviews, 70*(1), 2-21.
- Schermebeck, R.M., & Powell, L.M. (2015). Nutrition Recommendations and the children's food and beverage advertising initiative's 2014 approved food and beverage product list. *Preventing Chronic Disease, 12*(E53), 1-6.