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Children's self-regulation of eating provides no defense against television and online food marketing

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## Children's self-regulation of eating provides no defense against television and online food marketing

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### Abstract

Exposure to unhealthy food marketing stimulates children's food consumption. A child's responsiveness is influenced by individual factors, resulting in an increased vulnerability to advertising effects among some children. Whether these differential responses may be altered by different parental feeding behaviours is unclear. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between parental feeding practices and children's food intake responses to food advertising exposure. A randomised, crossover, counterbalanced, within subject trial was conducted across four, six-day holiday camps in New South Wales, Australia between April 2016 and January 2017 with 160 children (7-12 years, n=40/camp). Children were randomised to either a multiple media (TV and Internet) or single media (TV) condition and exposed to food (3 days) and non-food (3 days) advertising in an online game and/or a cartoon. Children's food consumption (kilojoules (kJ)) was measured at a snack immediately after advertising exposure and then at lunch later in the day. Parents completed the Child Feeding Questionnaire, and 'restriction' and 'pressure to eat' subscale scores were calculated. While food advertising affected all children in the multiple media condition, there was an increased effect on snack intake among children whose parents reported pressuring them to eat, with children consuming an additional 356kJ after food advertising compared with non-food advertising. This was 209kJ more than children whose parents did not pressure them to eat. In the single media condition, only children whose parents reported restrictive feeding practices ate more at lunch on food advertising days than non-food advertising days (240kJ). These data highlight an increased susceptibility to food advertising among children whose parents report controlling feeding practices.

**Keywords:** Food advertising; food intake; children; parental feeding practice; Child Feeding Questionnaire

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