Children’s exposure to food advertising: the impact of statutory restrictions

While many new forms of online marketing are emerging, television remains the primary medium for the promotion of youth-oriented food and beverage advertisements. However, the majority of these are for foods high in fat, salt and sugar. This study systematically looked at food advertising on UK television comparing data from 2010 and 2008 to assess if the nutritional quality of food advertisements was improved after implementation of regulations.

Overall, the study highlights little effect of these regulations and fast food items remain the most heavily advertised foods across the whole sample. To increase exposure to healthier options, policymakers should consider the merits of a ban on non-core food advertising pre-watershed (before 9 pm).