Outcomes of Healthy Eating Ad Campaigns: A Systematic Review

In previous years, social marketing campaigns have proven to be successful in reducing the prevalence of smoking, drinking and driving as well as other public health outcomes, with the inclusion of healthy eating. However, from previous reviews, it still remains unclear whether “ad campaigns are more effective in promoting the consumption of healthy foods or preventing that of unhealthy foods.” The aim of this research was “to conduct a systematic review of quantitative studies analysing healthy eating ad interventions to:

1. Evaluate outcomes in terms of stop, go, or both stop and go outcomes
2. Examine the nature of these studies in terms of methodologies, populations and intervention characteristics
3. Identify research gaps that should be addressed and provide recommendations for ad campaigns to curb obesity and promote healthy eating.”

A total of 14 studies were included in this review, comprising of a variety of campaigns. Success rates were appeared to be dependent on the type of studies, with quasi-experiments having the highest successful rate (88%). The study also seemed to point to the fact that “campaigns longer than 6 months are all successful in the review.” However, the research also highlighted that “neither stop or go may be the best routes for healthy eating persuasion, and that including both stop and go or offering alternative ways to engage in healthy eating may lead to more successful outcomes.”