Persuasive techniques used in television advertisements to market foods to UK children

The use of persuasive techniques in television food advertising has been associated with greater attention and likelihood of obtaining emotional responses from child viewers. Previous analysis of television food advertising identified the use of promotional characters, celebrity endorsers, premium offers, persuasive appeals or other attributes such as the use of website promotion as commonly used marketing techniques. The current study addressed the gap in the literature relating to the nature of food advertising by examining the use of persuasive appeals, premium offers, promotional characters, celebrity endorsers and website promotion in food adverts on the UK television channels popular with children and young people.

Brand equity characters were predominantly featured on a greater proportion of food adverts compared to licensed characters. This analysis of television adverts showed that despite the implementation of regulations, the use of persuasive marketing techniques to promote unhealthy food to children was extensive. Given the changing nature of food advertisements, future studies should analyse the content of the website promoted in the advertisement spots.