The effects of digital marketing of unhealthy commodities on young people: A systematic review

The commercial marketing of unhealthy commodities increases the use of such products. While television remains the most utilised promotional channel, evidence suggests that an increasing number of new digital marketing techniques are gaining momentum. Digital marketing has even been found to be more impactful than traditional marketing due to its characteristic of peer endorsement and lack of explicit advertising cues. The aim of this systematic review was to assess the findings from empirical studies that evaluate the association between digital marketing on young people’s attitudes andbehaviours towards unhealthy commodities.

The 28 included articles revealed a link between digital marketing and young people’s attitudes towards the current use of a range of unhealthy commodities including alcohol, tobacco and energy-dense nutrient-poor food or beverages. The review there concluded that exposure to digital marketing may be associated with young people’s attitudes and behaviours for a range of unhealthy commodities.