

“Food Advertising in Television Programs for Children is Informative? Valuable? Or Dangerous?”

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Department of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University



Current situation
Impacts
Proposed solutions



The Food and Nutrition Policy for Health Promotion (FHP)

International Health and Policy Program Foundation (IHPP)

Klung-pasadu Building, 3rd Floor, Soi Sataranasuk 6, The Ministry of Public Health, Tiwanon Road, Muang, Nonthaburi 11000

Tel: 02-590-2319, Fax: 02-590-2380

Email: fhp@ihpp.thaigov.net, Website: <http://www.fhpprogram.org>

CURRENT SITUATION

REGARDING UNHEALTHY FOOD AND
BEVERAGE ADVERTISING DURING THE BROADCAST
OF CHILDREN PROGRAMS ON FREE TV



Over-rating or under-rating of TV programs

Several legislation (FDA, CPB, NBTC) and practical guideline of the private sector involved

94% of direct advertising promotes unhealthy food, and 19% of this advertising involves other marketing strategies

98% of indirect advertising promotes unhealthy food

20% is without a permit

Many advertisements lack required warning, or there is a warning but not in compliance with the rules

Some claim that the product advertised provide nutritious value or health benefit

More than half target children and youth using various techniques

Rules adopted in Thailand remain arbitrary and contain loopholes, as compared to those adopted in foreign countries



THE IMPACTS OF UNHEALTHY FOOD AND BEVERAGE ADVERTISING ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Risks against physical health such as obesity, fear of being overweight, or underweight due to the lack of nutrition

Risks against social value and norm through the creation of distorted popular culture such as making audience believe that consuming the advertised product will enhance intelligence, ability or appearance

Psychological impacts

Risks against mental health such as development of behavior in children to imitate what they see in advertisements which may not suitable for children development

Physical — facing problem of malnutrition, lack of vitamins and minerals, and obesity

Media impacts

Mental — encourage persuasion, consumerism, materialism, and spending addiction

Intelligence — lacking the decision-making skill for food consumption

"The content in this document is an academic opinion of the author, not the opinion of the supporting offices or supporting organizations."

PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE



1. Control of advertising

Short-term

- ⌚ Minimizing the steps in bringing a legal action should be considered.
- ⌚ Cooperation within the private sector for greater efficiency in self-monitoring should be initiated.
- ⌚ Due to the legal loopholes, obsolescence and the lack of inclusiveness, there should be an ethical measure that play roles in interpretation of appropriateness of an advertisement. For example, the determining factors such as nutrition and nutrient profile should be required.
- ⌚ Definition of advertising should be reviewed and developed so that it is always up to date and inclusive. This also includes a review on rating of programs for suitability of the content.
- ⌚ Definition of food types should be reviewed so as to be consistent with nutritious principles.
- ⌚ Monitoring, following, and inspecting mechanisms after advertising is permitted should be reported with regard to the implementation outcome, sanction and publication of the report to the public.

Long-term

- ⌚ Control of advertising should cover both direct and indirect advertising.
- ⌚ Control of advertising should be strengthened through a review of rules, regulations, the process of monitoring and evaluation, an adjustment on the sanction, and an expansion of control enforcement to cover all aspects of risk against the general public.
- ⌚ Permission process for advertising should be responsible by only one working unit, and such a working unit should be a legal entity or an independent agency.
- ⌚ The monitoring and evaluation process should be directly responsible by a working unit with well-defined objectives and increasing involvement of all concerning parties, especially the monitoring process on advertising that targets children.
- ⌚ Control of advertising should link to other marketing strategies such as labeling, branding, and pricing. Examples are monitoring on information presented on the package of a product, and supporting of using food labeling that presents the traffic light symbol.
- ⌚ Resources such as staffs and budgets should be prepared to cover the cost of controlling advertising.
- ⌚ Strict control of unhealthy food advertising should target places where children are likely to be influenced such as schools and daycare centers.

2. Educating and raising awareness

- 🔊 There should be an initiation to provide education to the authority who has the power to monitor and control advertising, children, parents, persons who provide care for children, families, communities, and concerning individuals, in order to make them aware of the advertised content and improve decision-making in consumption.
- 🔊 Advertising should be done in a positive way such as advertising of healthy food or creativity in order to reduce time spent on watching TV or strolling around shopping malls, leading children to adjust their attitude to refrain from over-consumption.
- 🔊 Lessons and practical mechanism implemented in other countries should be learnt.