

Reducing the Exposure of Children and Adolescents to Digital Marketing of Unhealthy Foods: The CLICKBITE Study

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Background

Food marketing is unequivocally linked to children's food preferences, requests, purchases and eating. To analyse the promotion of digital food marketing (DFM) to children, WHO CLICK outlines these steps: Comprehend the digital ecosystem; identify Landscape of campaigns; Investigate exposure; Capture on-screen; and Knowledge exchange.

Aim and Objectives

This project will implement the WHO CLICK Framework to develop a deep, holistic view of food/beverage digital food marketing (DFM) and its regulation on the island of Ireland (Iol), plus a child rights analysis.



Design and Methods

The project involves the following: a review of reviews on the evidence for DFM to children; a scoping review on attitudes and awareness to DFM; screen capture of children's devices; focus groups with parents, children, young people and advertisers; documenting the digital landscape of food/beverage/delivery brands.

Findings

- A rapid review of reviews has been carried out. The findings indicate a body of evidence shows the relationship between DFM to children and a range of dietary and behavioural outcomes and behaviours. The evidence base on longer term impacts, obesity/overweight, and dental health is less well-developed.
- A scoping review of attitudes and awareness is underway.
- A total of 891 images/recordings were collected for the social media landscaping. Coding of the products is underway.
- Data collection using screen capture and focus groups methods are due to commence in Q3/Q4 of 2023.

Dissemination

The research team will share the findings from this study with academics (at conferences and in articles) and non-academics (on the radio, social media, and newspaper articles).



Patient Public Involvement

Two advisory groups have been established. The members were recruited via social media and researchers' contacts. One group consists of parents of children of any age and another with young people aged 15-19 years of age. The meetings with the advisory groups run online and for no longer than one hour. Two meetings have taken place with each group and three more meetings are scheduled to take place over the course of the project. The contributors were consulted on methods, ethics applications and recruitment material thus far, and will be consulted on dissemination and knowledge exchange.