

The role of food packaging on children's diet: Insights for the design of comprehensive regulations to encourage healthier eating habits in childhood and beyond

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BACKGROUND

Packaging design has become a key component of the marketing mix of food companies, to ensure the long-term success of their products, and to convey information that set apart their products from competitors. On-pack communication (design features, symbols, claims) can help consumers to make healthier food choices, but it can also mislead them if not well understood. In particular, packaging of products targeted at children is an important determinant of children's eating patterns, as it largely influence preferences and the food choices of parents and older children.

SCOPE AND APPROACH

The aim of this paper is to critically discuss the role of packaging in children's diet and in particular the role of packaging regulations as part of the multifaceted strategies that should be implemented to encourage healthier eating habits among children.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Comprehensive packaging regulations are necessary to protect children's health and encourage healthier eating habits from early years. Such regulations should go beyond products targeted at children, making informed decisions easier to encourage healthier choices, and including restrictions on the use of health-related cues on all products, as it ultimately influences the diet and the food available in the household..

FURTHER INFORMATION

Ares, G., Velázquez, A. L., Vidal, L., Curutchet, M. R., & Varela, P. (2022). The role of food packaging on children's diet: Insights for the design of comprehensive regulations to encourage healthier eating habits in childhood and beyond. *Food Quality and Preference*, 95, 104366. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2021.104366>