

Indian Child Social Media Influencers and Unhealthy Food Product Placement among Children

Foods and Nutrition

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Abstract

Study examined the extent to which Indian child influencers include unhealthy food and/or drinks products placements in their YouTube videos. 5 most watched kid influencers (ages 3 to 15 years) on YouTube in 2023 was identified. Their most-watched videos were Searched that featured food and/or drinks on the thumbnail image of the video. Than coded whether kid influencers consumed or played with food or toys, quantified the number of minutes food and/or drinks appeared and recorded names of branded/unbranded food and/or drinks. The nutritional quality of foods was assessed using nutritional profile model of the south-east Asia region. Results A total of 130 videos featured food and/or drinks. Food and/or drinks were featured in those videos 406 times. Kid influencers' YouTube videos were collectively featuring food and/or drinks were viewed 1.8 billion times. Most food and/or drinks were unhealthy branded items (n = 217; 53.44 %), followed by unhealthy unbranded items (n = 197; 48.52%), healthy unbranded items (n = 22; 5.41%), and healthy branded items (n = 23; 5.66%). Conclusion Kid influencers generate millions of impressions for unhealthy food and drink brands through product placement. The Federal Trade Commission should strengthen regulations regarding product placement on YouTube videos featuring young children.

Key words: Social Media, Child Influencer, Food Product Placement.