

The healthiness of food and beverage advertising on Sydney train stations: regulation and policy implications

Presented by

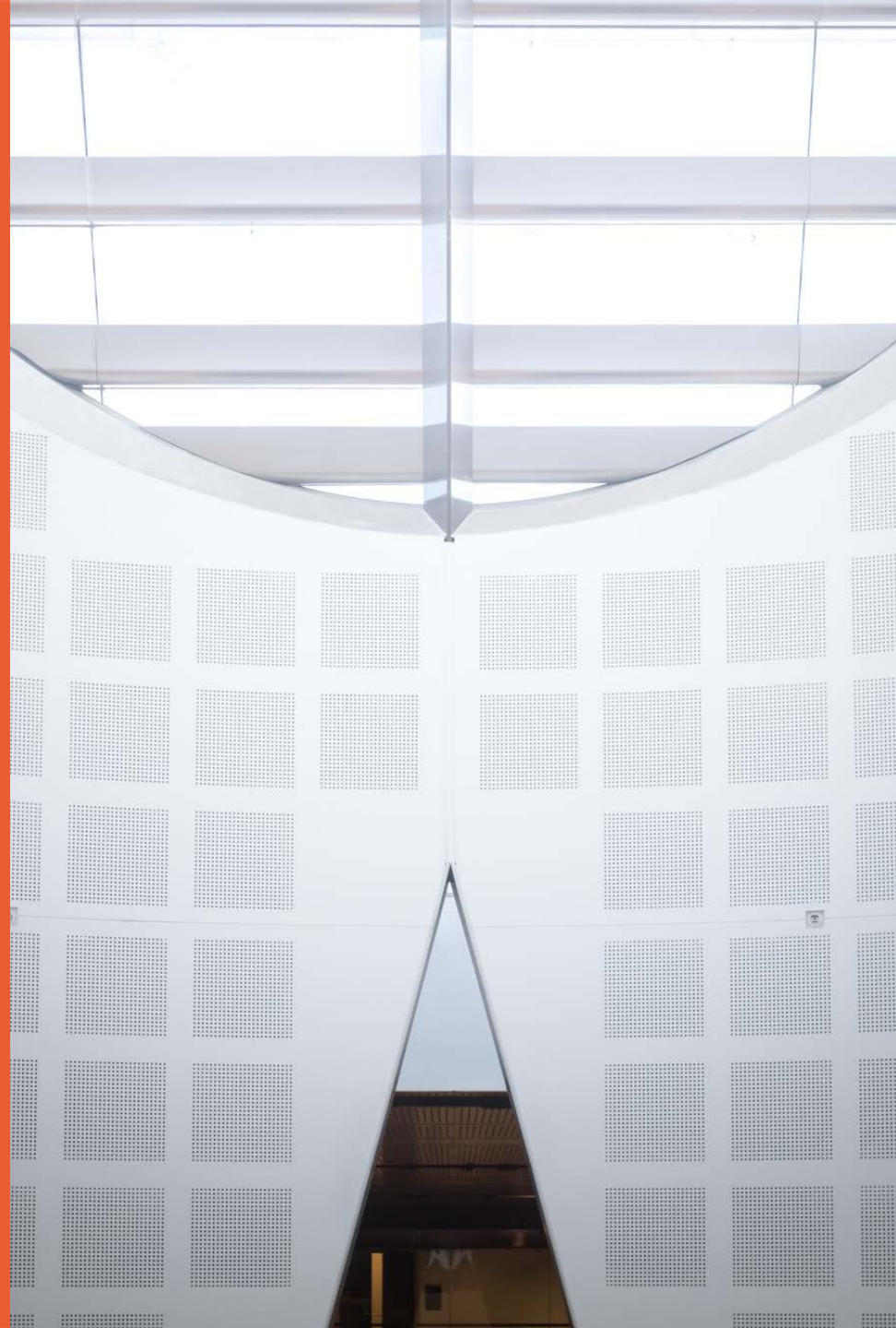
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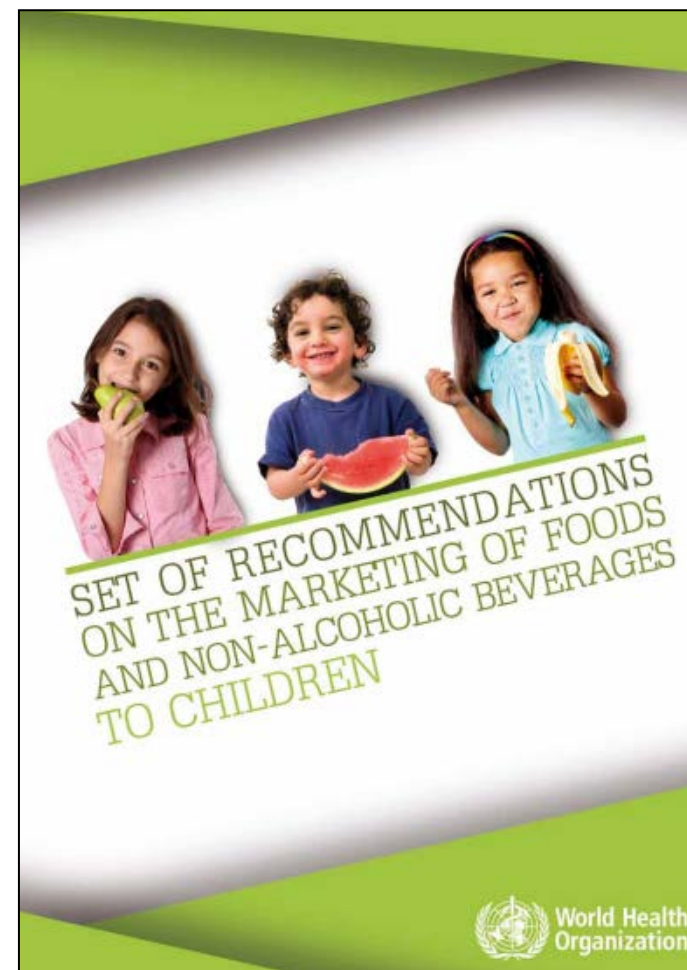


Presentation outline

- Background
- Research objectives
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Policy implications

Background

- 63% of adults and 27% of children are overweight or obese
- Increased marketing of energy-dense nutrient-poor foods identified as a causal factor
- Exposure to food advertising impacts food preferences and consumption of children (Cairns et al. 2009)



Train station advertising

- Sydney Trains record 1 million passenger journeys per weekday
- 67% of people report noticing advertising at train stations more than other places (APN Outdoor, 2011)
- 21% of station time is spent viewing cross-track advertisements
- Kelly et al. identified train stations as the setting with highest proportion of unhealthy food advertising (90%)
- 30% of all advertising on Melbourne transit stops are for food and beverages (Settle et al. 2014)

Regulatory system in Australia

Regulatory body	Code	Limitations
Australian Association of National Advertisers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Code of Ethics 2. Food & Beverage Marketing Code 3. Code of Advertising and Marketing Communications to Children 	Do not impose controls on the nutritional quality of advertised foods
Australian Food and Grocery Council	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responsible Children's Marketing Initiative 2. Quick Service Restaurant Initiative 	<p>Voluntary.</p> <p>Self-regulated by industry.</p> <p>Food companies set their own criteria for what is 'healthy'.</p> <p>Doesn't cover outdoor advertising.</p>
Outdoor Media Association	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Code of Ethics 2. Alcohol Advertising Guidelines 	<p>Do not impose controls on the nutritional quality of advertised foods.</p> <p>Alcohol guidelines are voluntary</p>
The ABAC Scheme	Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code	<p>Doesn't restrict the volume or location of alcohol advertisements.</p> <p>Primarily regulated by alcohol and advertising industry.</p>

Research objectives

1. To determine the level of public exposure to unhealthy food and beverage advertising on the Sydney metropolitan train network
2. To determine whether the amount and healthiness of food and beverage advertising varies by area socioeconomic status

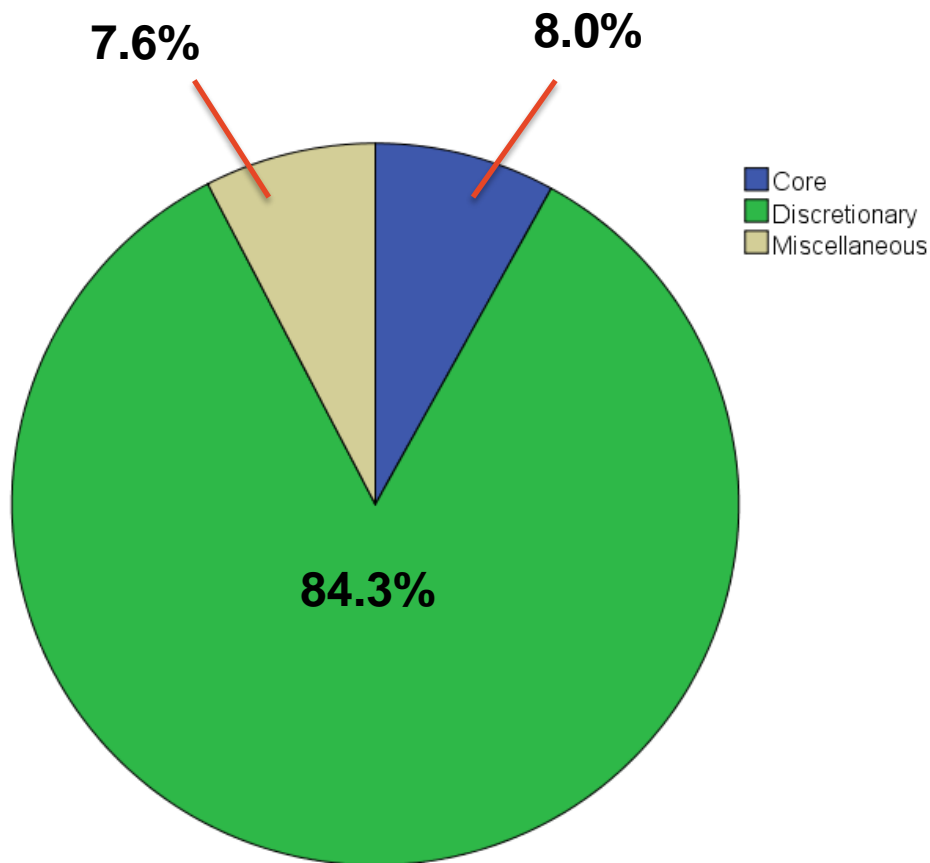
Methods

- Data collected over one week in February and July
- All 178 stations on the Sydney train network were surveyed
- Advertisement defined as any **billboard, poster, temporary flyer, branded furniture, vending machine or experiential display**
- Survey tool developed to collect information on:
 - Product type
 - Company/brand
 - Location
 - Format
 - Size

Coding system

- Advertisements grouped by nutrition category based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating:
 - Core (healthy)
 - Discretionary (unhealthy)
 - Miscellaneous
- 32 product sub-categories
- Stations coded as low (<1000), medium (1000-1100) and high (>1100) SES according to SEIFA score

Results



- 3466 advertisements (food and non-food) per season
- 956 were food or beverage advertisements (27.6%)
- 84% of the food advertisements were for discretionary products
- Close to 90% were medium or large sized advertisements

Product advertising

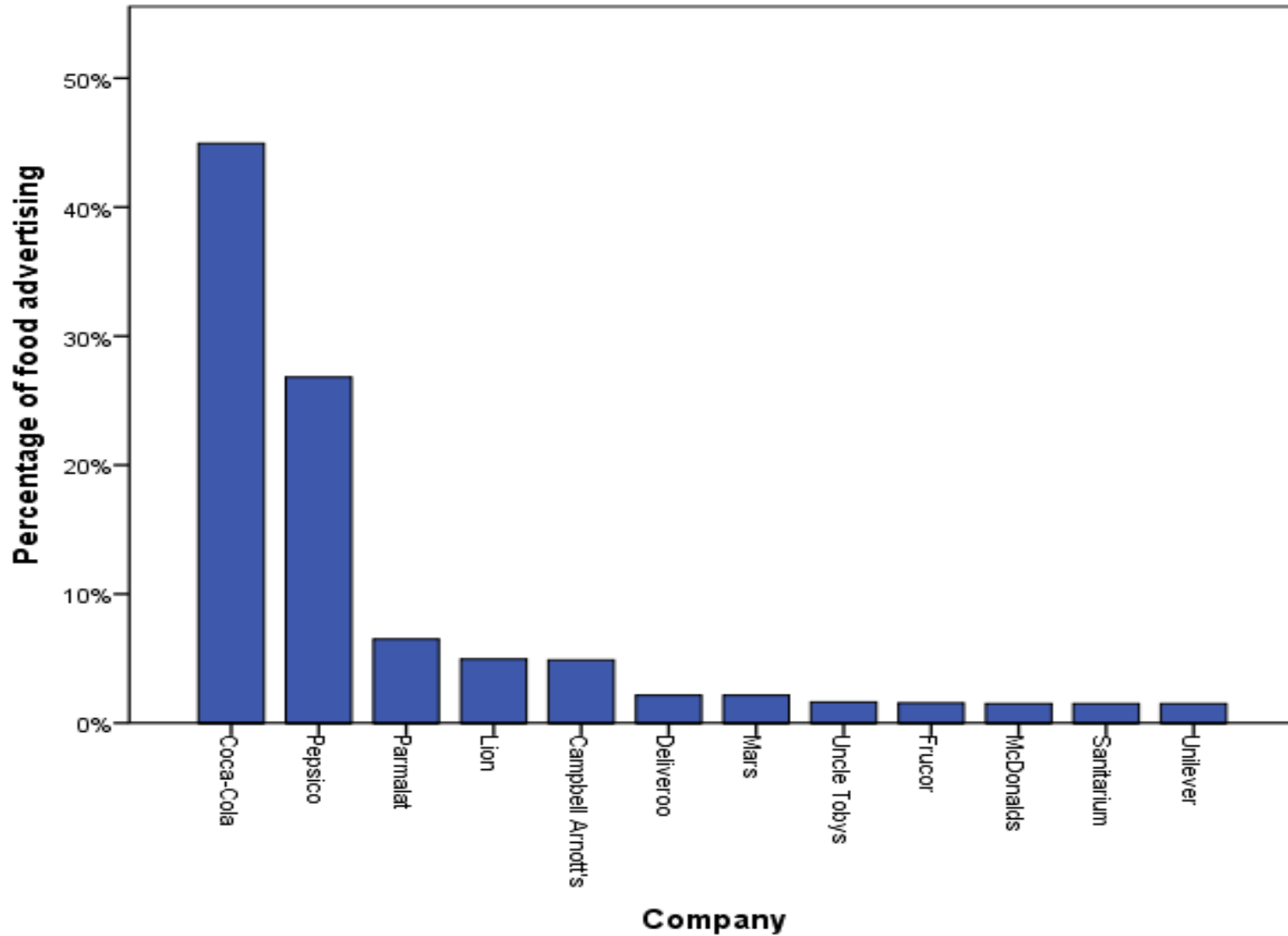
- Most frequently advertised food products were:
 - Snack foods (25%)
 - Sugar-sweetened beverages (23%)
 - Intense-sweetened beverages (18.7%)
- Majority (74.4%) of core food advertisements were bottled water vending machines

Alcohol advertising

- Approximately 60 alcohol advertisements per time-point (6.2%)
- Conservative estimate of true exposure to alcohol advertising



Brand advertising



Advertising by area socioeconomic status

	low SES (n = 65)	medium SES (n = 89)	high SES (n = 24)	p-value
Mean number (SD) of total advertisements per station	18.4 (42.4)	54.6 (129.7)	36.7 (57.0)	0.02
Mean number (SD) of food advertisements per station	8.7 (19.7)	12.1 (22.4)	11.2 (11.7)	0.59
Mean number (SD) of core food advertisements per station	0.9 (1.9)	0.8 (1.9)	1.0 (1.3)	0.93
Mean number (SD) of discretionary food advertisements per station	7.7 (18.2)	10.0 (19.4)	9.3 (10.2)	0.73
Mean number (SD) of miscellaneous food advertisements per station	0.2 (0.8)	1.3 (3.5)	1.0 (1.9)	0.02

- Low SES areas had a significantly higher proportion of advertising for discretionary foods (41.9%, $p < 0.001$)

Discussion

- Train station advertising poses a significant threat to public health, with 1 in 4 advertisements for unhealthy foods
- Greatest impact in vulnerable low SES communities
- Core food advertisements unlikely to translate into healthy food choices
- Repeated marketing of Coca-Cola on the network is likely to influence brand and product preferences
- Self-regulatory codes are insufficient in protecting public from unhealthy food advertising exposure

Policy implications for government

- Set interim targets to reduce the proportion of unhealthy food advertising permitted at each station
- Increase the proportion of advertising allocated to healthy food/health campaigns
- Nutrient profiling system needed to identify unhealthy foods
- Ban on alcohol advertising
- Government-appointed body for monitoring and policy enforcement is needed

Thank you

