A critical review of evidence on the sociocultural impacts of food marketing and policy implications

Responsible marketing policy has drawn on research on micro level effects of marketing on food choice, but little research exists on the macro level effects. To explore this gap, a review of evidence on the effects of food marketing on sociocultural food environment was conducted.

A review of reviews approach was used to search for evidence across a range of evidence sources. Evidence of impacts on dietary norms, population level shifts in preferences of food and drink categories were identified, and cultural values underlying food behaviours were identified.

The results investigated the impacts on dietary normal, population level shifts in food and drink category preferences and cultural values underpinning food behaviours. The review identified the need to expand research agenda from historical focus on micro level impacts to include research focusing on macro impacts. Expanding research to understand impact of for-profit food marketing on sociocultural food environment provides support for the strategic policy to create a food environment which encourages healthy food behaviours.