The obesogenic environment around elementary schools: food and beverage marketing to children in two Mexican cities

The objective of this study was to analyse the food advertising practices existing in sixty elementary schools in two cities and to evaluate compliance with Pan American Health organisation (PAHO) recommendations and the marketing code of local food industries.

Data collected from a random sample of elementary schools was selected from two Mexican cities. Using geographic information, a 100 m diameter was drawn around the school and trained staff captured photographs to assess locations and types of food advertisements. The results were grouped according to school type and indicators of compliance with PAHO and industry recommendations. A regression model was developed to determine factors predicting number of ads around schools.

Results discovered that ads were higher around public schools relative to private schools. Printed posters were the most common type of marketing medium, including promotions. Food advertising practices were complying with industry recommendations but not PAHO recommendations. The results support how important it is to monitor obesogenic environment and identifying policy tools to protect children from food marketing.