Does self-regulation work?

The case of television food advertisement to children in Germany

Stefanie Landwehr, Monika Hartmann

Improve the AVMSD: What about our kids?
European Parliament
Relevance of the topic
Childhood obesity has become a huge challenge for European societies over the last decades.

In Germany, 15% of all children are overweight, 6.3% are obese (Kurth & Schaffrath Rossario 2007).

Growing prevalence of children’s dietary-related diseases (CDC 2015).


Call for policy frameworks to reduce the exposure and impact of marketing activities to children (World Health Organization 2010).
Initiative in the EU of leading food and beverage companies
(e.g. Burger King, Coca Cola, Danone, ESA, Ferrero, Kraft Foods, Kellogg’s, McDonalds, Nestlé, Pepsico)
- In 2009: 11 food companies
- In 2014: 21 food companies

Purpose:
- Improve food advertising directed to media audiences with a minimum of 35% of children under 12 years (since 2012)
- No advertising to children on television and company websites of products not fulfilling the common nutritional criteria
- No marketing actions in primary schools
EU Pledge criteria (European Advertising Standards Alliance 2015)

- Until end of 2012: Company specific criteria
- Since end of 2012: Adoption of harmonized criteria (mandatory by the end of 2014)
  - Specific criteria for nine product categories (e.g. oils, cereal based products)
  - Relevant nutrients (values dependent on product category):
    - Energy, sodium, saturated fat, sugar
    - Positive nutrients
  - Sugar, sugar-based products, soft drinks generally banned

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AVMSD: What about our kids?
Research objective
Effectiveness of the EU Pledge

- Differences of member and non-member companies of the EU Pledge regarding children‘s food advertising (CFA) over time
  - Extent of CFA‘s
  - Nutritional values of advertised products

- Effectiveness of the EU Pledge in reducing children‘s exposure to television advertisement of EDNP products
Approach
Quantitative content analysis of German television program

- Data sampling in October 2011, October 2012, October 2014
- Weekend day and weekday
- Children’s 10 most popular TV networks
  - 2 public networks
  - 2 children’s networks
  - 6 commercial networks
- Detailed codebook to analyze television commercials and products’ nutritional value
- Evaluation of CFA products compliance with criteria of the EU Pledge
Selected results
Sample characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014 a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Television sample [h]</td>
<td>296.0</td>
<td>296.0</td>
<td>300.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television advertisement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration [h]</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of broadcasted spots</td>
<td>7,441</td>
<td>6,776</td>
<td>7,733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food advertisement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of broadcasted spots</td>
<td>1,554</td>
<td>1,522</td>
<td>1,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s food advertisement (CFA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of broadcasted spots</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of total commercials [%]</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of advertised products</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. commercial length [sec]</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Note: Number of total hours recorded in 2014 differ from previous years as Nickelodeon extended broadcasting time to 10 p.m. compared to 8 p.m. in 2011 and 2012

- Number and share of broadcasted CFAs as well as average length per CFA declined significantly (p < 0.001) over the period 2011 to 2014
## CFA: Comparing EU Pledge member and non-member companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pledge member</td>
<td>Non-member</td>
<td>Pledge member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s food advertisement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of broadcasted CFA</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of total commercials [%]</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television network type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's networks [%]</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>48.5</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other networks [%] a)</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Note: “Other networks” summarises the broadcasted CFAs of public and commercial networks

- CFAs share in total commercials declined to a similar extent for Pledge member and non-member companies
- Share of CFAs on children’s networks in total CFA’s significantly declined for Pledge member but not for non-member companies
### Nutritional values of CFAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011 Pledge member</th>
<th>2011 Non-member</th>
<th>2012 Pledge member</th>
<th>2012 Non-member</th>
<th>2014 Pledge member</th>
<th>2014 Non-member</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carbohydrate [g]</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar [g]</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein [g]</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>* a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total fat [g]</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>** b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated fat [g]</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>** b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium [mg]</td>
<td>183.4</td>
<td>115.8</td>
<td>197.1</td>
<td>219.2</td>
<td>252.0</td>
<td>188.5</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy [kcal]</td>
<td>405.9</td>
<td>322.4</td>
<td>425.9</td>
<td>317.6</td>
<td>454.7</td>
<td>320.2</td>
<td>* a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Nutritional value per 100g or 100 ml; ** p < 0.005; * p < 0.1; a) T-test; b) Mann-Whitney-U-test

- In 2012 and 2014, CFA products from Pledge members are significantly higher in proteins, but also in total fat, saturated fat and energy
- Move from sweetened food categories to salty snacks and fast food

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AVMSD: What about our kids?
Compliance of CFAs with EU Pledge

- **Children’s program**: Rise of compliance for member and non-member companies at the same level
- **Entire program**: Compliance rate at a considerable lower level compared to children’s program for both member and non-member companies and decline of compliance for member companies

![Graphs showing compliance rates before and after criteria introduction for children's program and entire television sample.](image-url)

**Note**: Before criteria introduction: \( n_{(member)} = 210 \) \( n_{(non-member)} = 173 \)
After criteria introduction: \( n_{(member)} = 65 \) \( n_{(non-member)} = 59 \)

**Note**: Before criteria introduction: \( n_{(member)} = 442 \) \( n_{(non-member)} = 332 \)
After criteria introduction: \( n_{(member)} = 172 \) \( n_{(non-member)} = 123 \)
Conclusion
Food advertisement targeting children improves moderately

- Improvement over time:
  - Decline regarding the overall extent of child appealing food advertisement
  - Rise of compliance with Pledge criteria for CFAs of member companies at least during children’s program

- Difference in compliance rate between study results and results of EU Pledge Monitoring Report 2014
  - 89.2% vs. 98.5% compliance rate in 2014
Commitments of signatory companies have limited impact

- Marketing of foods through television advertising targeting children declined considerably:
  - Non-members cut broadcasting of CFAs in all networks to a similar extent
  - Pledge member companies reduced broadcasting CFAs primarily in children’s networks
  - Compliance with the Pledge criteria is possible by shifting CFA for EDNP products from children’s networks to other networks
  - Limiting the EU Pledge to television program with an audience of minimum 35% children less than 12 years impedes the effectiveness of the scheme
Thank you very much for your attention!

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