

Expert Consensus as a Means to Advance Healthy Public Policy Action

Neil Neary
PhD Student, CHPS

Shandy Reed
Policy Analyst, APCCP

Kim Raine
Professor, CHPS

Background

- Epidemic of childhood obesity in Canada¹
- Growing amount of correlational evidence between environment and obesity²
- An evidence gap exists on the health outcomes available through modifying environments through action such as policy change²
- e.g. marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children



1. Tremblay et al, 2002.
2. Raine et al, 2008.

The Canadian Context

- Marketing influences children's preferences and consumption and is associated with childhood obesity¹
- TV advertising of nutritionally poor foods and beverages in Canada is prevalent²
- Self-regulation by industry is not sufficiently protecting children³
- Legislation in Québec is offering some protection, but there are issues⁴



1. Hastings et al, 2006.
2. Kelly et al, 2010.
3. Marin Institute, 2008.
4. Potvin-Kent et al, 2011.

Public Opinion on Marketing to Kids

2010 Ipsos-Descarie¹:

- 79% agreed that food marketing targeted to children contributes to overweight and obesity;
- 82% agreed that marketing of unhealthy food to children should be restricted
- 64% agreed that advertising targeted at kids should be **banned** in Canada

2011 Alberta Decision Makers Survey²:

- 71% support prohibiting advertising and promotion of unhealthy food and beverages to children under the age of 16.



1. Ipsos Descarie., 2010.
2. Alberta Policy Coalition for Cancer Prevention, 2011.

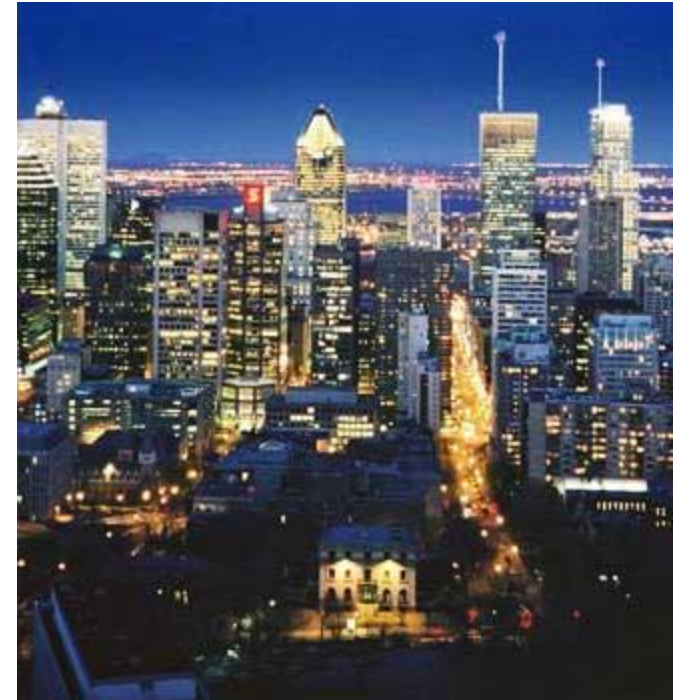
Issue

In light of a **clear** need for action, but **incomplete** levels of evidence for policy interventions, how can policy makers determine the best course of action available?



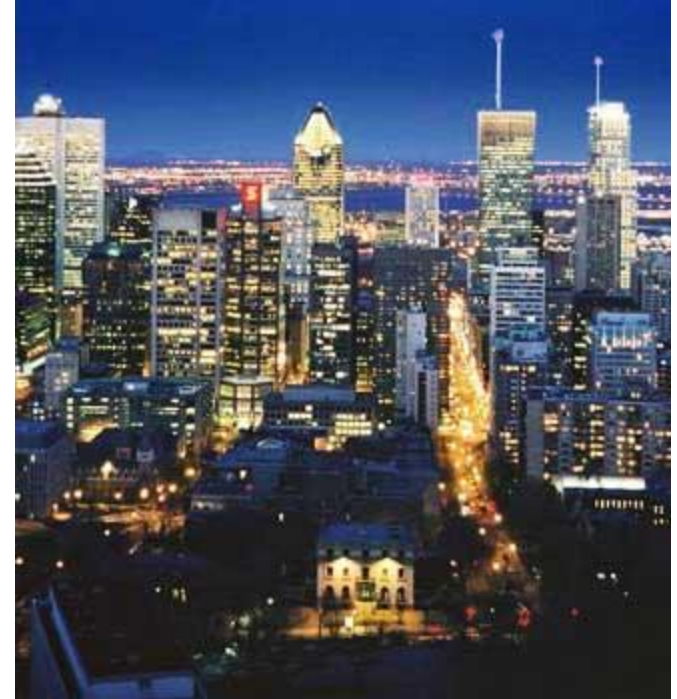
Approach

- Consensus meeting in Montréal, QC April 2011 arranged by the APCCP and Coalition Poids (Québec) with invited experts from Canada, the UK and the US
- Policy approaches to respond to increasing childhood obesity in Canada.
- One area of interest in particular was that of exposure of children to marketing for unhealthy foods and beverages.



Method

- Participants represented research, practice, and policy backgrounds.
- Participants provided short presentations on insights from their work and/or research followed by facilitated discussion
- Circulation of a draft document created by the APCCP team. Revisions were integrated into the final consensus statement which was re-circulated for final approval.



Issues for Policy on Kids Marketing

- Vague definitions
 - Marketing
 - Child-directed
- Cross-border leakage
- New media
 - Internet
 - “Advergames”
 - Texting
- Redeeming nutritional value
- Role of industry



The Consensus

- Recommend a federal government determined national regulatory system which prohibits commercial marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children.
- Essentially a strengthening and expansion of the Québec model to all Canadian jurisdictions.
- Set minimum standards, monitor compliance and impose penalties
 - Definition of “child directed”
 - Product criteria issue
 - Definition of “marketing”

It's not perfect, but...

- Expert opinion is often seen as a valid source of evidence for decision makers. Expert consensus allows for inclusion of multiple viewpoints from various disciplines which makes it suited to complex health issues.
- Expert consensus can provide direction for healthy public policy when:
 1. The need for change is clear and,
 2. The evidence is sufficient, even if it is incomplete.
- This consensus statement can be:
 1. A resource for decision makers
 2. A tool for healthy public policy advocacy

Consensus Conference Participants

Name	Title	Organization
Manuel Arango	Assistant Director, Health Policy, Government Relations and Advocacy	Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
Sue Buhler	PhD Candidate in Health Promotion	University of Alberta
Tim Caulfield	Professor & Research Director	Law Faculty, University of Alberta
Diane Finegood	Professor	Simon Fraser University
Samantha Hartley-Folz	Manager, Grant Liaison & Policy	BC Healthy Living Alliance
Bill Jeffery	National Coordinator	Centre for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)
Jane Landon	Deputy Chief Executive	UK National Heart Forum
Craig Larsen	Executive Director	Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada
Tim Lobstein	Director of Policy and Programmes	IASO - IOTF
Lyne Mongeau	Department of Social and Preventive Medicine	Université de Montréal
Nazeem Muhajarine	Professor	University of Saskatchewan
Suzie Pellerin	Directrice	Coalition québécoise sur la problématique du poids
Lisa Petermann	Program Manager, Primary Prevention	Canadian Partnership Against Cancer
Monique Potvin Kent	PhD Candidate in Population Health	University of Ottawa
Kim Raine	Professor	University of Alberta
Michele Simon	Research and Policy Director	Marin Institute
John Spence	Associate Dean/Research	Physical Education & Recreation Faculty, U of A

References

1. Tremblay MS, Katzmarzyk PT, Willms JD. Temporal trends in overweight and obesity in Canada, 1981-1996. *Int J Obes Relat Metab Disord*. 2002 Apr;26:538-43.
2. Raine K, Spence JC, Church J, Boulé N, Slater L, Marko J, et al. State of the evidence review-urban health and healthy weights. Canadian Institute for Health Information. Ottawa; 2008.
3. Hastings G, McDermott L, Angus K, Stead M, Thomson S. The extent, nature and effects of food promotion to children: a review of the evidence. World Health Organization; 2006
4. Kelly BM, Halford JCP, Boyland EJMM, Chapman KM, Bautista-Castano IMP, Berg CP, et al. Television food advertising to children: a global perspective. *Am J Public Health*. 2010 Jul 15.
5. Marin Institute. Why big alcohol can't police itself: a review of advertising self-regulation in the distilled spirits industry. 2008 [updated 2008 September; cited 2011 July 28]; Available from: http://www.marininstitute.org/site/images/stories/pdfs/08mi1219_discus_10.pdf.
6. Potvin Kent M, Dubois L, Wanless A. A nutritional comparison of foods and beverages marketed to children in two advertising policy environments. *Obesity*. 2011 Jun 30.
7. Ipsos Descarie. Quebec coalition on weight-related problems: omnibus web survey results. In press 2010.
8. Alberta Policy Coalition for Cancer Prevention. APCCP survey results for healthy eating, active living, alcohol misuse and tobacco reduction issues: decision-maker survey of knowledge, attitudes and beliefs. 2011.