Adolescents' presentation of food in social media: An explorative study

# Details

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## Topics

* Internet usage, practices and engagement
* Social mediation
* Risks and harms

## Sample

1001 Instagram accounts by 14-year-old adolescents in Scandinavia.

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

## Implications For Educators About

Other

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Other

## Other PolicyMaker Implication

Markting of unhealthy foods

## Implications For Stakeholders About

# Abstract

The study aimed to explore how adolescents communicate food images in a widely used social media image-sharing application. We examined how and in what context food was presented and the type of food items that were frequently portrayed by following a youth related hashtag on Instagram. The hashtag #14år (“14 years”) was used to find adolescent users on Instagram: these users public photo streams were then searched for food items they had shared with others. Food items were identified and categorized based on type of food and how the food items were presented. Most of the adolescent users (85%) shared images containing food items. A majority of the images (67.7%) depicted foods high in calories but low in nutrients. Almost half of these images were arranged as a still life with food brand names clearly exposed. Many of these images were influenced by major food marketing campaigns. Fruits and vegetables occurred in 21.8% of all images. This food group was frequently portrayed zoomed in with focus solely on the food, with a hashtag or caption expressing palatability. These images were often presented in the style of a cook book. Food was thus presented in varied ways. Adolescents themselves produced images copying food advertisements. This has clear health promotion implications since it becomes more challenging to monitor and tackle young people's exposure to marketing of unhealthy foods in these popular online networks because images are part of a lifestyle that the young people want to promote. Shared images contain personal recommendations, which mean that they may have a more powerful effect than commercial advertising.

# Outcome

"Most of the adolescent users (85%) shared images containing food items. A majority of the images (67.7%) depicted foods high in calories but low in nutrients. Almost half of these images were arranged as a still life with food brand names clearly exposed. Many of these images were influenced by major food marketing campaigns. Fruits and vegetables occurred in 21.8% of all images. This food group was frequently portrayed zoomed in with focus solely on the food, with a hashtag or caption expressing palatability. These images were often presented in the style of a cook book. Food was thus presented in varied ways. Adolescents themselves produced images copying food advertisements. This has clear health promotion implications since it becomes more challenging to monitor and tackle young people's exposure to marketing of unhealthy foods in these popular online networks because images are part of a lifestyle that the young people want to promote. Shared images contain personal recommendations, which mean that they may have a more powerful effect than commercial advertising." (Authors, in Abstract)