

Media, Obesity

The Role of Children's Movies Weighs Heavily in the Tackling and Fumbling of Obesogenic Issues

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The media's influence both positively and negatively on children is a frequent topic of study in our journal and others. This week, we add to that evidence-base with a study by Howard et al. ([10.1542/peds.2017-2126](#)) looking at the prevalence of obesity-promoting behaviors or stigma as displayed in recent popular children's movies. The authors looked at the 31 top-grossing films from 2012-2015 and for each ten minute segment of a film, raters identified and described what was being eaten, the activity and whether there was weight-related dialogue being observed in a film. The results are concerning to us and will likely be to you as well. 100 % of the films studied had obesity-promoting content involving unhealthy foods, larger than recommended portion sizes, plenty of sugar-sweetened beverages being drunk, and more weigh-based stigma such as verbal insults about someone being overweight or obese. Even more concerning was that these findings were not isolated ones in each of the 31 films, but occurred repeatedly in each.

Do you talk about films seen by your patients with your patients? Do you tell them to focus on the healthy and unhealthy behaviors being observed and then share their thoughts on these behaviors with their families or with you? Perhaps this study will trigger increased awareness of what our children are being exposed to in films and lead to better preventive strategies starting with what they choose to snack on when they do go to the movies.

We certainly know the influence of smoking and other risk-taking behaviors depicted in films viewed by teens, but this study now opens the door to additional themes we might not have thought about before thanks to the information one should digest first by reading this study and then sharing what you learn with your patients- especially those who are at risk for becoming increasingly overweight or obese.

- [Digital Screen Media and Cognitive Development](#)
- [Sexual Media and Childhood Well-being and Health](#)
- [The Effect of Advertising on Children and Adolescents](#)
- [The Continuing Rise of Gun Violence in PG-13 Movies, 1985 to 2015](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)