

Abstracts of oral presentations

Conference 'Nutrition Disparity and Equity: From differences to Potential'

Friday, 8 November 2019 – WICC Wageningen

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Healthy is (not) tasty? Implicit and explicit associations between food healthiness and tastiness in primary school-aged children and parents with a lower socioeconomic position.

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It is known that many adults, consciously or not, believe that unhealthy foods are tastier than healthy alternatives; a so-called 'unhealthy = tasty intuition'. This study explored implicit and explicit associations between healthiness, tastiness and liking of foods in primary school-aged children and parents with a lower socioeconomic position (SEP).

Participants were recruited at food banks in the Netherlands. Implicit association tests and paper-and-pencil questionnaires of 37 parent-child dyads were analysed.

Results indicated that children and parents implicitly associated healthy foods and tastiness more strongly with each other than healthy foods and not tastiness ($D = -0.19$, $p = .03$ and $D = -0.46$, $p < .001$, respectively). On explicit level parents showed similar results, while children's results were mixed; on some measurement instruments children indicated that they found unhealthy foods tastier than healthy foods.

In conclusion, overall the results indicate a 'healthy = tasty intuition'. However, a genuine belief that healthy foods are tastier than unhealthy foods is in contrast with more unhealthy eating habits that often prevail in families with a lower SEP. Therefore, alternative interpretations of the findings are discussed, taking methodological and theoretical considerations into account. It is recommended that future research sheds more light on e.g. daily life practices of, and norms and values held by, low SEP parents and children, to unravel how associations between (un)healthy foods and tastiness are developed and constructed. Brief, preliminary insights in such an in-depth research, that recently started, will be provided.