

[P1.1.30]

How do front of pack nutrition labels affect healthfulness perception of foods targeted at children? Insights from Brazilian children and parents

M.F. Lima¹, G. Ares², R. Deliza^{*1}

¹*Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil*, ²*Universidad de La República, Uruguay*,
³*Embrapa Agroindústria de Alimentos, Brazil*

Childhood obesity is a growing public health crisis throughout the world. Front of pack (FOP) nutrition labels are one of the public policies that can be implemented to cope with this phenomenon. Different FOP labelling schemes have been developed to encourage informed food choices. The present study aimed at evaluating the effect of different FOP labels on the perceived healthfulness of food products targeted at children by Brazilian children and parents. In an online survey, 318 children (6-12 years old) and 310 parents were asked to rate their perceived healthfulness of eight familiar food products containing different FOP labels (*traffic light system* -TLS-, *guideline daily amounts* -GDA- and *warning system*), following a within-subjects experimental design using 7-point scales.

Significant differences in the perceived healthfulness of the products were found for both children and parents. The influence of FOP labels was different for children and parents. In the case of parents, products with the *warning system* were rated significantly less healthy (average score 2.4) than those containing the GDA system (2.7). The TLS did not significantly differ from the other systems. In the case of children, the influence of FOP labels was modulated by income. Low-income children perceived all products more healthy ($p < 0.05$) than high-income children and their perception was not significantly affected by FOP labels. Perceived healthfulness ratings given by high-income children were significantly affected by FOP label but only for two of the products: stuffed cookies and frosted corn flakes. For both products, labels featuring the GDA system were perceived as more healthful than those containing the TLS and the warning system. Results from the present work suggest that directive and semi-directive FOP labels, such as the TLS and the warning system, have the potential to modify healthfulness perception of both children and parents.

Keywords: Food Labeling, Front of pack, Traffic Light system, Children