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# Measuring Target Marketing as an Influence on Disparities in Obesity

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# Agenda

1. Describe the importance of understanding targeted marketing in relation to disparities in obesity.
2. Explain how the influence of target marketing on disparities in obesity has been conceptualized and measured.
3. Elaborate important challenges to accurately assessing the influence of target marketing on disparities in obesity.

# Why Focus on Target Marketing?

- Marketing is a system designed to influence consumer choice and consumption.
  - Shapes the awareness of, access to and cost of food and beverage products
- Targeted marketing concentrates strategies on specific consumer groups
- Ethnic minorities attractive targets for marketers
  - Targeted strategies build on media usage, consumer orientation and social environments

# Target Marketing and Obesity Disparities

- Research suggests targeted marketing may predispose minority consumers to poor dietary quality.
- Targeted marketing may limit the effect of general prevention initiatives.



# The Target Marketing Process



# Understanding Consumers



“The Dollar Menu appeals to lower-income ethnic consumers. It’s people who don’t always have \$6 in their pocket.”

Steve Levigne, McDonald’s vice president for U.S. Business Research (Warner 2011)

# Ethnic Target Marketing Approaches

- Advertising
- Cultural symbols
- Event sponsorship
- Scholarships
- Outdoor advertising
- Product placements in movies, songs
- Street teams
- Giveaways
- Internet websites
- Mobile Marketing
- Social networking
- Word of mouth
- Community relations
- Employment opportunities
- Custom products

Grier and Kumanyika (2010) *Annual Review of Public Health*

# Targeted Marketing Environment

## Product Strategy

- Types of Food
- Packaging
- Portion Sizes

## Promotion Strategy

- Advertising
- Sales Promotions
- Sampling
- Cross-promotions
- Cause-Related



## Price Strategy

- Actual Prices
- Relative Prices
- Cost to Access

## Distribution Strategy

- Food outlet Presence
  - Fast food
  - Supermarkets
- Variety and quality of food available



# Conceptual Basis

- Need to consider marketing as a system of strategies that consumers encounter
- Complexity of the causal chain for the influence of marketing on health outcomes
- Limited research measuring targeted strategies or effects on non-regulated products and adults

# The Big Picture

Characteristic	Marketer's Perspective	Consumer's Perspective	Public Policymaker's Perspective
Point of View	External ("buyers")	Internal ("me")	External ("buyers and sellers")
Level of Interest	Aggregate ("market")	Individual ("myself")	Aggregate ("affected groups")
Scope of Interest	Product specific ("what I make")	Across products ("what I buy")	Across products ("all products/ services")
"Correct" Choice	Brand specific ("my brand")	Best alternative ("best brand for me")	Neutral ("maximize utility")
Role of Influence	Influence behavior ("please buy this")	Handle behavioral influence ("what I should buy?")	Neutral ("must be fair and not deceptive")

Wilkie (1994) *Public Policy and Consumer Behavior*, in *Consumer Behavior*, John Wiley & Sons. p. 705.

# Types of Supporting Evidence

- The product is harmful
- Excess exposure to marketing activities
- Exposure influences behavior
- Marketing influence excessive

- Are African Americans more likely to be targeted with unhealthy foods than White consumers?
  - What types of food and beverages *products* are they *made aware of*, do they have *access to*, and what do they *cost*?
- Systematic review of empirical research from 1992-2006 across disciplines
- Search identified 20 interdisciplinary articles
  - Eight studies on promotion and product
  - Eleven studies of food distribution
  - Three studies of food prices

# Diverse Methods

- Content analyses of advertising and in-store promotions
- Spatial and statistical analyses of retail food outlets locations and prices using GIS and secondary data
- Market basket studies, market inventories and menu audits within retail food outlets
- Community based participatory research

# Product and Promotion

- Key measures
  - The promotion of more or less healthy foods
  - Verbal and visual references to foods or beverages
  - Ethnicity of endorser linked to food or other health-related advertising
- Key comparisons
  - In “general market” or “mainstream” or White oriented media relative to media oriented to Black, and Hispanic adults, women, or children
  - in-store restaurant promotions in minority versus majority dominated areas

# Place and Price

- Key measures
  - Available foods and their prices in food stores and fast food outlets
  - Locations and travel distances to food stores and fast food outlets
- Key comparisons
  - Minority versus majority neighborhoods or census tracts defined by proportion of Black, White, and Hispanic residents or low/high income residents

# Summary of Review Findings

- Promotion dominated by low cost, low nutrition food products such as candy, soda and snacks.
  - Positive nutritional messages appear less frequently
- Relative to predominately White neighborhoods, predominately Black neighborhoods:
  - have fewer supermarkets, and healthier food choices less prevalent.
  - have a higher density of fast food outlets
  - yet fast food may cost significantly more



# Limitations of Review Data

- Research primarily cross-sectional
- SES and race frequently confounded
- Focus on advertising and distribution
- Quality assessment

# The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) 2011 Study

- Follow-up to their 2008 report examining targeted marketing of foods to children and adolescents.
  - Information request to 48 companies for expenditures, samples of marketing activities and research studies.
- Targeting conceptualized as “*intended to reach an audience that, in whole or in part, consisted of children 2-11 or 12-18*”
  - Media placement
  - Content (cartoons, licensed characters, celebrities)
  - Youth targeted healthy eating initiatives

# Sample FTC Study Measures

- Television, radio and print advertising
- Company-sponsored Internet sites
- Other digital advertising
- Packaging and labeling
- Movie theater/video/video game advertising
- In-store advertising and promotions
- Premium distribution
- Sponsorship of public entertainment events
- Product placements
- Character licensing, toy co-branding, and cross-promotions
- Sports sponsorship
- Word-of-mouth and viral marketing
- Celebrity endorsements
- In-school marketing
- Advertising via philanthropic endeavors

# FTC Study and Ethnic Targeting

Study also addresses marketing to sub-groups of youth defined by gender, race, ethnicity or income.

1. Were any of the advertising or promotional activities specifically directed, according to a marketing plan or by virtue of advertising placement, language used, characters used, or other content, to individuals of a specific gender, race, ethnicity, or income level?
2. Did the company tailor any of the policies or market research reported to address marketing to individuals of a specific gender, race, ethnicity, or income level?

# Consumer Response to Target Marketing

Experimental research shows minorities more favorable to targeted marketing efforts.

- Persuasion driven by similarity processes
- Also respond to non-targeted ads



Aaker, Brumbaugh and Grier (2000) *Journal of Consumer Psychology*; Grier and Brumbaugh (1999) *Journal of Advertising*

# Consumer Response Measures

- Identification
- Felt targetedness
- Attitudes
- Beliefs
- Emotions
- Preferences
- Trade-offs
- Intentions
- Perceived norms
- Physiological

# Digital Marketing

## McDonald's McCafé Mocha Mondays Go Mobile with Millennial Media

### GOAL

Engage the Hispanic community in New York City to drive McCafé Mocha samples / transactions on McDonald's "Free Mocha Mondays" – one of the company's largest sampling campaigns to date.



### SUMMARY

- **Hyper-Targeted:** The campaign used different targeting methods – demographics and geo-location – to drive results. Only Hispanic consumers within given NYC blocks were served ads.
- **Reach within Tight Parameters:** Millennial Media's extensive mobile reach enabled McDonald's to aggregate a large enough audience – even within very tight targeting parameters – for the company to promote their new McCafé Mocha product effectively.
- **In-Language:** In-language banner ads and mobile landing pages were developed to resonate with the target consumers.
- **Drove Transactional Actions:** Banner ads directed targets to a campaign landing page to collect opt-ins for four SMS alert reminders about free McCafé Mochas. The SMS alerts steered consumers into a local NYC store to sample a free 7oz Iced McCafé Mocha or an 8oz Hot McCafé Mocha.
- **Company First:** Built upon the strategy set by McDonald's agency, d'expósito & Partners, the effort represented McDonald's first mobile initiative to target the Hispanic demographic.
- **Long-Term Benefits:** The campaign fostered relationships with potential and current customers and leveraged mobile engagement to entice consumers to try a new product and even change behavior.

# Measurement Challenges

- The measurement of synergistic and cumulative effects
- Linking targeted marketing strategies, environments and consumer response
- Evolving strategies with new metrics
- The marketing of healthy foods and other counter-marketing



# Conclusions

- Assessment of targeted marketing must consider the system of strategies.
  - Complements focus on individual marketing variables as an environmental influence
- Also need to consider consumer response to the variety of marketing strategies.