Method: Children aged 5-7 years photographed their total dietary intake on two days (one week day; one weekend day). Using Photo Voice methodology, photographs were used as prompts during semi-structured interviews conducted at home with a child and a parent. The interviews aimed to determine the experiences and explanations of child and parent relating to their 1) relative roles in everyday food selection, and 2) strategies used to influence family food selection.

Results: Children provided 1) comprehensive photo records and 2) detailed explanations of strategies used to influence family food.

Discussion: This pilot study demonstrates that even young children can be active research partners in studies that aim to determine children's experiences of potentially obesogenic settings, for example, in terms of children's roles in selection of food and activities in the family environment.

P17: THE COOKING SKILLS AND VALUES, ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS AROUND FOOD AND COOKING OF LOW INCOME PARENTS

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It has been proposed that social gradient observed in the prevalence of obesity is in part due to a lack of education and poor cooking skills among those with fewer socio-economic advantages.

The current study aimed to explore the cooking skills and values, attitudes and beliefs around food and cooking of low income parents. The theoretical framework used was the Food Choice Capacity Model (Bisogni 2005). Semi-structured interviews assisted by a photo sort were used to collect data. Interview transcripts were thematically analysed using the constant comparative method.

Preliminary results for 5 low income (disposable income < $500 pw) parents show that the cooking skills and confidence vary widely in this low income group of parents. The act of balancing conflicting values when cooking is apparent from the interviews. The importance of healthiness, convenience, taste and cost when deciding on what food to cook are prioritized differently by each participant and the parents try to balance these competing values using their level of cooking skill. One common theme across all participants is that the participants' children are a major factor when decided what to cook. Participants cooked according to their children's tastes, while ensuring that the child or children are receiving a variety of foods that the parent wants them to consume.

Findings from this study will inform the development of a quantitative tool to measure the cooking skills of low income parents in the community, to identify those at risk of having insufficient skills. Findings could also be used in social marketing campaigns to target the promotion of preparation and consumption of healthy foods.

P18: REGULATORY APPROACHES FOR OBESITY PREVENTION IN AUSTRALIA

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The aim of this project is to comprehensively analyse potential regulatory approaches to obesity prevention and the reduction of social inequalities in obesity prevalence in Australia. Analysis grids and an extensive literature review have been used to identify regulatory options at each level of government. Regulations relating to the food system (targeting production, processing, distribution, marketing/advertising, retail and service), environments for physical activity (urban planning, public
transport, walkability/cycling, facilities and opportunities) and broader over-arching approaches, such as cross-departmental taskforces or surveillance systems, are considered. The aim of this paper is to describe the processes involved in the project and to present some findings. In-depth consultation is being undertaken with various stakeholders including local government representatives (already completed), senior bureaucrats from central and line departments within the state/territory (in process) and federal government departments, statutory authorities, non-government organisations and academics. Opportunities and gaps, barriers, facilitators, feasibility and implications of potential approaches are being identified and examined through these consultations. At the local government level a snowballing technique was used to recruit participants, while purposive and snowballing sampling is being used at the state/territory level to ensure a diversity of respondents and that all relevant jurisdictions/stakeholders and states/territories are represented. Results from the local government level found support for regulatory intervention to create supportive physical activity environments but little support for regulating healthy food environments. Barriers to regulatory intervention included competing priorities, such as food safety, reluctance to further increase regulation and local government’s perceived or real lack of power to make changes. Facilitators included access to evidence, external funding, community lobbying and regulation sensitive to market forces. Results from the state/territory government level are currently being analysed.

P19: THE EFFECT OF THE BE ACTIVE EAT WELL INTERVENTION ON CHILDREN’S SCHOOL FOOD AND DRINKS AND THE SCHOOL NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT

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The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Be Active Eat Well (BAEW) intervention on children’s school foods and beverages and the school nutrition environment.

BAEW was a 3 year community-based nutrition and physical activity intervention. The evaluation comprised a longitudinal, quasi-experimental design and measurements in the intervention and regionally-representative comparison groups included a school food checklist and survey of the school nutrition environment. Participants were 77 school staff and 1105 children aged 4-12 years at baseline.

Mean daily servings of water increased more in intervention children (mean change: intervention +0.89 and comparison -0.04 servings; \(p<0.001\)) and there was moderate evidence of a decrease in mean daily servings of sweet drinks in the intervention group (\(p=0.11\)), particularly girls (\(p<0.06\)), but only reached significance for older (10-14yrs) children (\(p=0.02\)). No significant changes in mean daily servings of fruit or energy dense, nutrient poor (EDNP) snack foods were observed. Nutrition policies were adopted by 83% of intervention schools and a decrease in soft drink/fast food company sponsorship of fundraising or school events in intervention schools (33% to 17%) was also seen, compared to an increase in comparison schools (33% to 58%).

The BAEW intervention was more successful at changing children’s drinking behaviours than food behaviours, and this may reflect the intervention strategies used. Success was seen with a policy-based approach and the successful strategies need to be extended to reduce the provision of unhealthy foods from the school food service and the amounts of EDNP snack foods that children take to school.