

Sweet taste exposure and subsequent generalised sweet taste preferences
Katherine M Appleton, Bournemouth University, UK

Many current global health concerns have been linked to high intakes of free sugars. Whilst reducing consumption of free sugar for health reasons is recommended, it is currently unclear as to whether our consumption of sweet foods also needs reducing. We recently conducted a systematic review of the literature to investigate the impact of sweet taste exposure on subsequent sweet taste preferences. Our searches and screening resulted in the identification of only 21 studies involving repeated exposure to sweet taste, a comparator and subsequent preferences for other sweet foods. These studies provide very limited, highly heterogeneous evidence to address our question. This evidence provides no clear consistent relationship between sweet taste exposure and subsequent generalised sweet taste preferences. Some evidence was found for a short term reduction in preferences following a high exposure to sweet taste, but evidence from cohort studies and longer term trials was equivocal. The implications of these findings for consumers will be discussed. Adequately powered randomized controlled trials of sufficient duration with well described exposures and outcomes are recommended.