

Invited Speaker Abstract

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Title of Presentation

Food stories: using storytelling to endorse healthy eating habit

1. Abstract

Since the 1990s TV cooking shows and 24/7 cooking channels started to blossom and never left the mediascape. On the contrary, social media have only further fueled the amount of information and pictures we nowadays share about food. Consumers became more knowledgeable about food than ever, yet at the same also more confused about what to eat, and the obesity pandemic continued to grow worldwide.

In this talk we will review what we know about the impact of food endorsers ranging from food celebrities to food influencers, and the girl next door. We will start with outlining the diversity of different food endorsers active today, highlight what we know about their popularity and strategies, and emphasize the importance of storytelling and entertainment-education strategies. We then demonstrate how we apply these strategies in two ongoing projects. In the first project (VLIR-UOS Food Media Stories 2018/19) we apply the use of storytelling and entertainment-education in a weight gain prevention intervention in Cape Town, South Africa. We target women in townships who struggle with overweight and obesity, and try to improve their food literacy by exposing them to stories about women they can relate to. Elements of food literacy are embedded in these stories and shared via traditional media (TV videos) and social media (WhatsApp). In the second project (InFLOOD 2019/23) we want to learn from past and present successful food gurus and food influencers in Flanders how we best communicate about food, to apply this knowledge to both what governments and health organizations, and food industries communicate towards the end consumer. The integrated approach of InFLOOD imposes further challenges we will discuss as well.

2. key references

3. key messages

- 1) We need to pay more attention to 'food media'; the cooking shows people watch, and the food influencers they follow on social media,
- 2) We can learn from these highly influential people how to communicate more effectively,
- 3) We need to apply this to evidence based information about food and dietary guidelines to inform consumers effectively.