

Measuring food preferences: evaluating the use of parental reports as proxy for their children

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Abstract:

Childhood obesity remains a significant public health concern, highlighting the importance of understanding the biological predispositions that contribute to unhealthy dietary patterns. However, research has primarily relied on parental reports of their children's natural predispositions, raising the question of whether these reports truly capture children's actual preferences. This study explores the agreement between parent and child reports on developmental food preferences, finding strong correlations that indicate robust agreement. Additionally, both parents' and children's reports showed good and comparable predictive validity. These findings suggest that children as young as six seem able to reliably report their developmental preferences, aligning well with parental ratings. Thus, whether to prioritise children's or parents' reports about children's predispositions towards food may depend on logistical or ethical considerations, seemingly without compromising data quality.

Keywords: Proxy report, self-reports, eating behaviour

Track: Consumer Behaviour