



NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh



School food environments and adolescent health

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Background

- Adolescent are not meeting dietary recommendations and youth overweight is of public health concern ¹
- School food environments – important context to support and enable healthy food choices ²
- Evidence to date for a role of external school food environment and diet is equivocal ³
 - Mostly cross-sectional studies and from North America
 - Cultural, environmental, behavioral and planning or regulatory factors
 - Methodological issues and the environmental data sources
- Data in Ireland are lacking



Aim

Study 1: To examine associations between fast food outlets surrounding post-primary schools and youth dietary habits

- Using cross-sectional HBSC Ireland survey data
- www.hbsc.org; www.nuigalway/hbsc



Study 2: To explore adolescent's perception of local school food environment

- Qualitative multi-method study with post-primary school students

Methods

Study 1- HBSC Ireland (n=63 schools; 5344 students)

Student-level data

- Demographics,
- Daily fruit, veg, sweets, soft drinks
- Family food environment

School-level data

- School food availability
- Urban/rural status

GIS

- Geocoded PP schools
- 1km buffer
- Categorized food outlets

Multivariate logistic regression

Study 2- Mapping N=6 schools; 96 students

Focus groups

- n=6 schools
- Mapping exercises
- Topic guide
- Photos

Thematic analysis

Associations between fast food environments and diet

n=5,344

	Fruit daily	Vegetables daily
	Adjusted Odds Ratios	
Food sold in school	0.87	1.05
Rural	0.92	1.04
>10% fast food within 1km	0.78*	0.79**
DEIS schools	0.79*	0.73**

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Controlling for demographic, family food environment and school (DEIS, internal food availability)

Associations between fast food environments and diet n=5,344

	Soft drinks daily	Sweets daily
	Adjusted Odds Ratios	
Food sold in school	0.99	0.91
Rural	0.76	0.86
>10% fast food within 1km	1.00	0.94
DEIS schools	1.79***	1.00

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Controlling for demographic, family food environment and school (DEIS, internal food availability)

Study 2 Results – Food Outlets (AVAILABILITY)

Spar/Londis/
Centra/Costcut
ter

Lidl/ Aldi/
Dunnes

Topaz

Subway

Apache/
Papa Johns/
Dominos

Local
supermarkets

Supermacs/
Mc Donalds/
BK

Local fast
food
places

Supervalu

Local
Cafes



Sweet shops

Local pubs

Easons

Local
restaurants

Local hotels

Local
health
food shop

Study 2 Results – FOODS PURCHASED

Health bars

Sesame sticks

Energy drinks –
Edge, Lucozade
sport

Coffee

7up/Coke/Mi
wadi

Pot
Noodles

Milk,
water

Biscuits,
buns

Croissant

Nuts,
popcorn

Yoghurt



Burgers,
pizza

Salads, fruit
salads

Chocolate,
donuts

Chicken curry,
lasagne

Wedges

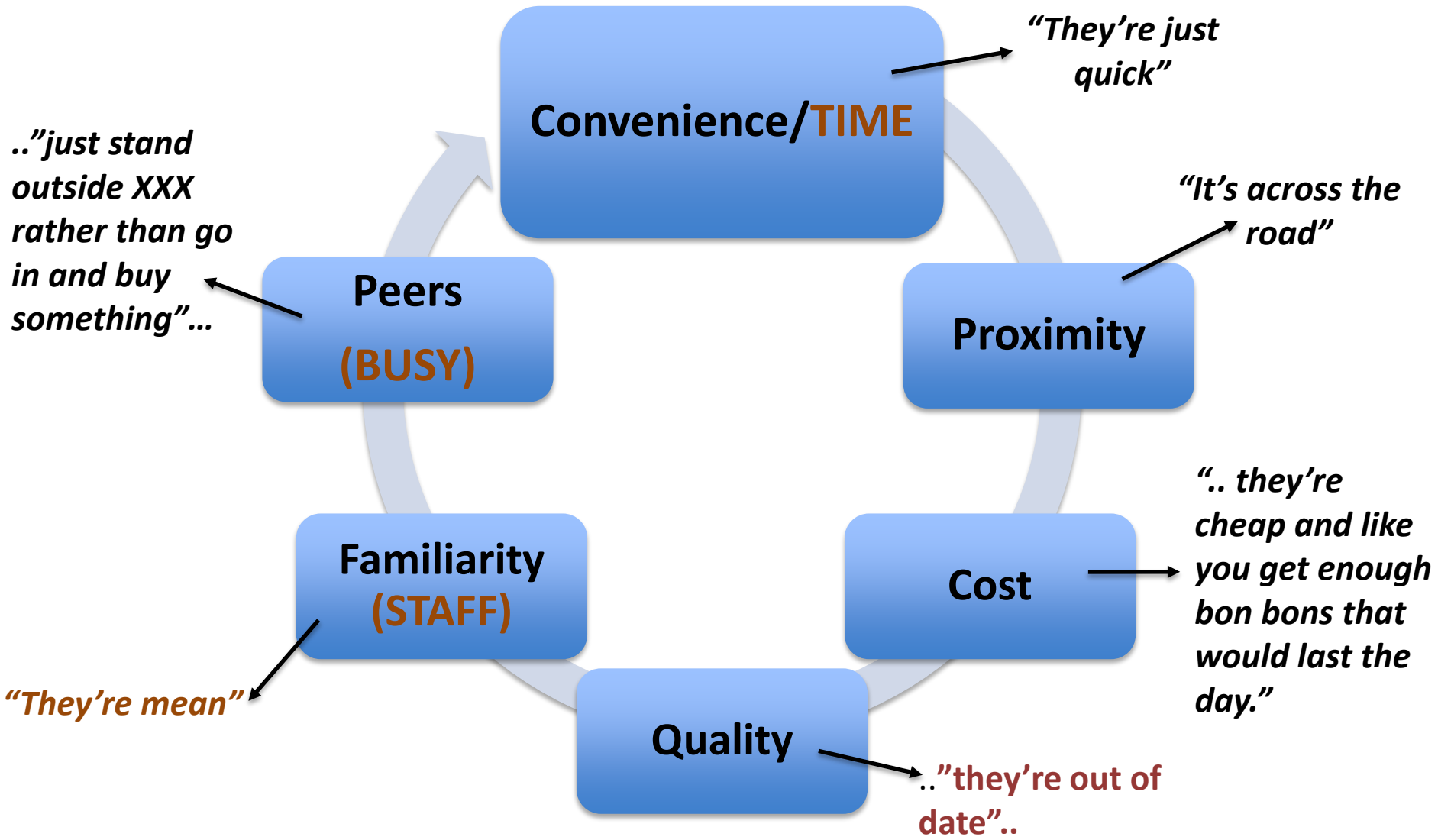
Sweets

Wraps, paninis,
soup

Sausage (rolls)
and chips

Hot chicken
fillet rolls

Drivers: food outlets and food choice



Conclusion

- Poor dietary habits reported by students – objective and subjective data
- The healthy choice is not the easy choice
- Need to re-consider a ban on fast food premises near schools
- Time to align health with planning for the built environment
- Important to work with students, schools and local food outlets to impact youth health.



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THANK YOU



Questions?



References

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