

## Children's Non-Core Consumption: Role of Peer Context

**Introduction.** Children have been found to be influenced by their peers when it comes to their non-core snack and drink consumption. The present study examined the relationship between children's gender and school type (primary and secondary education), and similarities in consumption patterns in children's social networks resulting from either selection or influence processes.

**Method.** The study used three waves of MyMovez data collected during a school year, across 29 classrooms divided over 13 different schools in the Netherlands (N = 673, 51% girls). Measures used in the study included children's non-core snack and drink intake, friendships nominations, and several demographics.

**Results.** The results of a longitudinal multi-level social network analysis indicated that children's non-core consumption became more similar to that of their friends over the school year, and that children preferred to befriend others who consumed similar amounts of non-core snack foods and drinks. Selection based on intake similarity was stronger for boys, but influence processes were similar for boys and girls. No differences were found between primary and secondary school children.

**Conclusion.** Selection and influence of snack non-core snack and drink consumption seem to be pervasive processes among children of different ages.

**Keywords:** non-core consumption, peer influence, peer selection, social network analysis, children, gender, primary education, secondary education