The role of the transnational ultra-processed food industry in the pandemic of obesity and its associated diseases: problems and solutions

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Why regulatory policies to counteract strategies used by TN ultra-processed food industries to increase the sales of their products inexist in most countries or are restricted to a few products in others?
The TN UPF industry narrative ‘food is not tobacco’

• ‘We all need food’

• ‘Consumed in moderation and combined with other foods, any food (even those processed) can make part of a healthy diet’

• ‘There are no unhealthy foods, only unhealthy diets’
An alternative narrative

• ‘We all need food’

• ‘Any food can make part of a healthy diet except ultra-processed foods, which are unhealthy by design and are formulated and marketed to be overconsumed and to displace healthier foods’

• ‘As tobacco, ultra-processed foods should be strongly regulated’
Ultra-processed foods as defined by NOVA food classification system*

‘Ultra-processed foods are technological formulations of raw and chemically modified food substances added of flavors, colors, emulsifiers and other cosmetic additives.’

Processes and ingredients of UPF allow the industry to obtain durable, ready-to-consume, hyper-palatable, and highly profitable products liable to replace all other NOVA food groups’

Ultra-processed foods are formulated to be over-consumed and to replace real food
Marketing of ultra-processed foods typically reinforces overeating...

It is one after the other!

The name says it all:
‘Non-stop is simply irresistible’.
`Nestlé Canada is thrilled to introduce Peelin’ Pops, a unique new frozen treat that looks like a banana and tastes like one too! With something so fun and tasty, kids and adults alike will be entertained each and every time, keeping them coming back for more.`

http://www.corporate.nestle.ca/en/media/pressreleases/...treat-kids-will-go-bananas-over
Global sales from these companies: US$1,1 bi /day (2013)
Articles in PubMed with the term ‘ultra-processed’
Studies in Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Argentine, Mexico, US, Canada, UK, France, Australia, Japan, Taiwan ... show that UPF had:

- higher energy density
- higher content of free sugars and unhealthy fats
- lower content of protein and fibre
- lower content of vitamins and minerals

Source: Monteiro et al Pub Health Nutr 2017
Ultra-processed foods and chronic diseases: non-nutrient mechanisms

- Effects on microbiome (Zinocker and Lindseth 2018)
- Absence of bioactive compounds (Martinez-Steele 2017)
- High glycemic index and low satiety (Fardet 2016)
- Hyper-palatability (Kessler 2009; Brownell 2012; Moss 2013; Ifland 2018)
- Mindless eating (Cohen & Farley 2008)
Cross-sectional and longitudinal studies show that ultra-processed food consumption is associated with obesity, hypertension, dyslipidaemias, metabolic syndrome, heart attacks, stroke, breast cancer and total cancer.
Annual retail sales of ultra-processed food and drink products in 80 countries (2013)

Kg/person

How Big Business Got Brazil Hooked on Junk Food

By ANDREW JACOBS and MATT MCGILL
PORTALEZA, Brazil — Children squat in rows through the mayhem of a street vendor, waiting for food. For many, the only thing they see is junk food.

Cecelina de Souza Silva, left, and her daughter Sabrina delivering Kit-Kats and pudding in Fortaleza, Brazil.

As she dropped off variety packs of Clavelly pudding, Kit-Kats and Mission infant cereal, there was something striking about her customers: Many were tanned. She was making deliveries to some of the poorest households in this jungle city.

With high blood pressure, a condition she acknowledges is probably tied to her weight for fried chicken and Coca-Cola drinks with every meal, she had no choice but to leave her home for a job delivering food to the poor.

Nestlé's direct sales arm in Brazil is part of a broader transformation of the food system that is delivering Western-style junk food to the poor, not just in Brazil but in countries across the world.

U.S. Digging in For Long Haul in Afghanistan

A REMAKING OF KABUL

By ROD NORLAND

KABUL, Afghanistan — Soon, American military engineers and contractors will no longer need to take a helicopter ride to set up a tent in the middle of a military base deeper than 100 yards outside the perimeter of an airport. Instead, the boundaries of the green zone will be drawn on an include this base, known as the Kabul City Compound, formerly the headquarters for American Special Forces troops in the capital. The zone is separated from the rest of the city by a network of police, military and private security checkpoints.

The expansion is part of a huge public works project that over the next two years will reshape the center of the city to better isolate the troops from the rest of the city to better isolate the troops from the rest of the city.
In Asia’s Fattest Country, Nutritionists Take Money From Food Giants

When the food industry funds nutritionists, critics say it subverts science to preserve its market.
Actions and policies that are not working:

Misleading nutritional labelling
Cosmetic product reformulation
Marketing self-regulation
The real best buys:
Taxation, warning labels and strong marketing restrictions on ALL UPF
Dietary guidelines based on real food and real meals
Consistent food procurement policies
A global framework convention on food systems to limit the influence of TN UPF industry
Thank you!