

# Stakeholders' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Fast Food Consumption in Thai Adolescents

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**Abstract** The aim of this qualitative study was to explore factors perceived to be important by a range of stakeholders, in influencing the increasing fast food consumption in Thai adolescents and how this may be tackled. Data were collected in semi-structured interviews with key Thai stakeholders. Eighteen potential representatives were interviewed; 10 representatives came from government sectors at national, regional or local levels; 4 from non-government sector organisations and 4 from private sector organisations. All interviews were analysed using a framework approach. Individual responses across interviewees were compared with particular questions, and themes were developed from a literature review. The study duration was six months in total. The results showed that factors perceived as influencing increased fast food consumption in Thai adolescents included taste, affordability and increased availability of fast food, positive individual attitudes to fast food, family and parental influences such as changing family structure and lack of parental time, peer pressure, school policies, and fast food availability in schools and media and food advertisement. Suggested approaches to reduce fast food intake and improve the diets of Thai adolescents included health education and health promotion, as well as policies to reduce unhealthy food production, availability and impact, and improving the implementation of government policy through increasing the capacity of nutrition professionals, improving intersectoral collaboration and better fiscal support. Future potential policy approaches to improve unhealthy diets of Thai adolescents are likely to need to address this broad range of factors working at different individuals social and environmental levels, using more complex, intersectoral approaches.

**Key words:** stakeholders, fast food consumption, factors, suggested approaches

## Introduction

Thailand has recently been undergoing a nutrition transition which has prevailed worldwide<sup>(1)</sup>. Traditional dietary patterns in the Asia which mainly rely

on rice as staple food and rich in vegetables and fruits and low in animal source food have been shifted to more “westernized” diets which are often high in energy density and content of sugar and saturated fats<sup>(2)</sup>.

Particularly, the growth of a “fast food culture” is believed to be one of the contributing factors to the shift in dietary patterns as well as the rapid change from under-nutrition toward over-nutrition<sup>(3,4)</sup>, and a key determinant increasing the risk of overweight and obesity<sup>(5,6)</sup>.

Western fast food has become socially acceptable and affordable for Thai people. It was ranked among the top ten most commonly consumed light meals among Thai children. Twenty seven percent of Thai adolescents and adults were reported to ever consume fast food in the last three months<sup>(7)</sup>. Its public health impacts and adverse effects on the nutrition were clearly acknowledged nationally<sup>(8)</sup>. Particularly, wide international research showed a range of individual and environmental factors (e.g. attitudes, knowledge, parents, school environment, and media and advertising) contributing to increasing fast food consumption in adolescents<sup>(9,10)</sup>, yet there has been very little specific research of factors influencing the diet of adolescents in Thailand. Greater research on the impact of fast food in Thailand is needed to bring these issues to the attention of policymakers.

The aim of this study was to explore the perceptions of key Thai stakeholders about potential influences on the diets of Thai adolescents, especially that influencing fast food intake, and what actions may be effective at tackling unhealthy diets. As considered effective methods for gathering information about food choice processes among population such as adolescents and older adults<sup>(11,12)</sup>, a qualitative method were used to gain a greater understanding of the study issues.

## Methods

### ● Sampled key stakeholders

A list of possible stakeholders was reviewed from the literature by a researcher. Then key stakeholders who have a direct interest in and could potentially

impact fast food consumption in Thai adolescents were purposively selected under discussion with food and nutrition policy experts to help identify specific key informants. In order to gain more information from informants who were otherwise difficult to identify, the snowballing technique was also employed in the study. Fifteen potential representatives in all sectors which are mostly in high ranking positions in order to provide insight into their organisation or sector (e.g. the director, and senior advisor of the offices, heads of some divisions, and managers of the companies) were initially identified in the study (Table 1). Three informants from government sectors were added as recommended by other respondents.

### ● Description of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders

Participants were contacted in advance by e-mail and telephone and invited to take part in the study. Verbal consent of all respondents was obtained before arranging an interview. To inform consent, all selected stakeholders received an official letter from the researchers via the Ministry of Public Health Thailand providing information about this study including its aim, objectives, methods and expected outcomes of the study. This was followed by a contact from the a researcher who was available to answer any questions about the study. During the process of consent, the stakeholders were given the option of their responses being cited or remaining anonymous.

The semi-structured interviews were carried out in Thai and tape-recorded by one of the researchers in the offices or other place of work of stakeholders. Before starting an interview, the study aim, objectives and methods were introduced again and final written consent for participating in the study was requested. Respondents were informed that their interview responses were anonymised to ensure confidentiality and kept securely and separately, from the file with personally identifiable information. Only the research-

**Table 1** Sampled stakeholders for semi-structured interviews

Sector	Stakeholder
<b>Government</b>	
Health	One representative of Department of Health, the Ministry of Public Health Thailand One representative of the Provincial Public Health Office in Phetchaburi Province Two senior national experts in food and nutrition policy*
Education	One representative of Office of the Basic Education Commission, the Ministry of Education Thailand Three representatives of secondary school director (including a director, teaching staff in food and nutrition and member of the Teacher and Parent Association of the school) One university professor in food and nutrition
Society and human security	One representative of Women's Affairs and Family Development Office, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security Thailand*
<b>Non-government</b>	
Non-government organisation	One representative of the Foundation for Consumers One representative of the Thais No Belly Network
Civil society	One representative of Development and Civil Society Network of Thailand
Non-government organisation and civil society	One representative of the Thai Health Promotion Foundation
<b>Private</b>	
Fast food industry	Two representatives of fast food companies in Thailand
Convenience store industry	One representative of Convenience Store companies
Advertising and marketing industry	One representative of advertising and marketing company who creates advertising and marketing campaigns for fast food industry

**Note:** \*a respondent who was recommended for interview by another stakeholder

ers were able to match up participants' names to their study responses. The stakeholder interview took between 45 minutes and 2 hours. In a few cases, the stakeholders were re-contacted via telephone after the interview was transcribed to clarify responses.

The interview topic guide was developed from the subjects identified in the literature review focusing on key themes:

Perceptions of the diets of Thai adolescents,  
Perceptions of what factors, at individual, social and environmental levels, influence what Thai adolescents eat, including fast food,

Opinions and/or experiences about policies or interventions influencing unhealthy food intake in ado-

lescents in Thailand.

Interview questions (Figure 1) were pretested on colleagues who both work related and not related to food and nutrition in order to ensure that the questions were clearly understood by interviewees. As supported by Morse and Fields, and by Bell, pre-testing interview questions helps identify a lack of clarity in the structure of the interview<sup>(13,14)</sup>. This study had the flexibility of modifying interview questions during the fieldwork in order to allow questions better suited to the real situation of different respondents.

#### ● Data processing and data analysis

Each interview was transcribed manually in Thai language, and then all the interviews were analysed

1. What are your views about the diets of adolescents, especially secondary school age groups, in Thailand today?
2. What do you think influences what adolescents eat?
3. [Prompt]- What do you think influences fast food intake in Thai adolescents?
4. Describe any actions your organisation is taking to improve diets in Thai adolescents in the secondary school age group.
5. What government policies can you think of that might have influenced fast food consumption?
6. What policies or approaches do you think could potentially improve diets of Thai adolescents in secondary school age?
7. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Figure 1 Semi-structured interview guide

using a framework approach which is often used for exploratory research<sup>(12)</sup>. It was a deductive, iterative process grounded in the specific objectives of the study. This involved comparing individual responses to emerging themes across all interviewees, on the study issues. Transcripts were explored for key concepts classified into four main levels (individual, social, physical and macro-level environments) which were based on social cognitive theory and ecological models and the literature review. The emerging themes were reviewed and interpreted by considering the stakeholders and their perception in factors influencing on Thai adolescents' dietary behaviours in particular fast food intake, their involvement in Thai adolescents' diets and their suggestion on appropriate approaches for reducing fast food consumption in Thai adolescents.

The objective of the final analysis was to develop an understanding about the similarities and differences in perceptions of key stakeholders from all sectors that the framework approach facilitated this by arranging the data from each interview across charts by themes. The original quotes of the semi-structured in-depth

interviews were translated to English and are shown in italics in the text.

The findings of the study could be organized around 3 main themes:

1. Views of stakeholders on changes in the diets of Thai adolescents,
2. Views of stakeholders on factors influencing fast food consumption by Thai adolescents,
3. Views of stakeholders on approaches to reduce fast food intake in Thai adolescents.

#### ● Validity and reliability

In order to improve the validity and reliability of this qualitative investigation, this study applied the approach suggested by Mays and Pope (1999)<sup>(15)</sup>. This involved triangulation of data across sources by comparing the results from the stakeholders' interviews and from the literature and policy reviews in order to ensure the comprehensiveness of a set of findings. The characteristics, as well as the responses, of key stakeholders were also considered. The difference of the accounts of individual informants was a useful part of a process of error reduction, which helped generate further original data in this study. Documents which might help interpret the information were also presented. A clear account of data collection methods, including how key stakeholders were selected for interviews, explanation of data collection and analysis procedures is also important for the study quality. Quotes from the interview transcripts were used as examples of particular definitions so the reader can see how interpretation was built on the data.

## Results

### Views of stakeholders on changes in the diets of Thai adolescents

All interviewed stakeholders agreed that there have been considerable changes in the dietary behaviours of Thai adolescents over the past decade, though there were differences in how they each un-

derstood the nature of these changes. Several stakeholders, mainly from the private sector, believed that adolescents' diets have improved over this same period. For example:

"... [fast] food is still very healthy for them [adolescents], with vegetable ingredients (fast food industry representative)."

However, other than the members of the private sector, all other stakeholders expressed concerns about the deteriorating quality of adolescents' diets:

"Today, Thai adolescents consume less rice, the staple food in Thailand. Instead, they consume [many] bakery products such as bread and instant noodle as well as processed meat and food high in sugar and salt, but extremely [few] vegetables (the Ministry of Public Health representative)."

#### **Views of stakeholders on factors influencing fast food consumption by Thai adolescents**

Several key factors perceived by stakeholders could be considered under three main themes: 1) individual factors, 2) social and physical environment, and 3) advertising and marketing. However, there were clear differences between stakeholder views about the aspects of fast food that attract adolescents.

##### **● Individual level factors**

**Taste and price of fast food** were most discussed by stakeholders in influencing attractiveness of fast food for Thai adolescents. Nevertheless, it is likely that taste and fashion were not mutually exclusive. The affordability of fast food was also considered by many stakeholders to be important in terms of the role of price, especially fast food sales promotions lowering prices to attract young consumers (even though it was questioned by some stakeholders who thought that it was relatively expensive):

"During summer break the price of one set of fast food falls to 29 bahts, compared to an original price of 40 or 50 bahts (university professor)."

##### **The role of screening time and the use of the**

**internet** were indicated by several stakeholders from government, non-government and private sectors that not only did they influence through product advertising, but also as a way of influencing their diet habits:

"[...] The more food advertising on television they watch, the more food products appeal and stimulate them to try the products (secondary school director representative)."

"We provide online ordering service for fast food delivery to students especially, because we know that going online is part of their lifestyle today (fast food industry representative)."

**Psychosocial factors**, particularly **individual attitudes to eating fast food** and **concerns about health and body image** were discussed. The stakeholders from health, NGO and civil society sectors believed that perceptions of body image were partly influenced by their peers. Adolescents who ate fast food were seen by their peers as people who were modern, fashionable and noteworthy, "making them look awesome (the Provincial Public Health Office representative)" and "demonstrating wealth status (Thai Health representative)." However, the stakeholder from the advertising and marketing industry argued that no matter how concerned adolescents seemed particularly about their health, they still ate fast food:

"They want to eat but are worried about weight gain, so they skip meals and choose to eat junk food such as snacks and fast food instead of Thai staple food like rice."

##### **● Social and physical environment factors**

Most stakeholders believed that the **home environment**, particularly the role of parental behaviour including the impact of parental diet, parenting styles, time spent with their children, knowledge about their children's diets, and attitudes of eating fast food plays an important role in influencing adolescents' diets. Time spent with their children was mostly and extensively discussed to be crucial factor influencing fast

food choice to their children.

“Parents today have less time to take care of their kids. [so]...parents become fatigued by the arduous task of training kids in good dietary behaviours [...] they are oblivious of these appeals and lack the knowledge, and psychological techniques needed to train adolescents in eating well (Thai Health representative).”

“[Parents] who do not have time to spend on cooking or preparing food for children [...] and so anything which is quick will be taken instead (the Ministry of Public Health representative).”

The **school environment** with food availability in school, school food policies and the role of teachers were considered important elements contributing to the diet of Thai adolescents. Particularly, school food policy however was argued by some stakeholders from both the education and private sectors that school policies were limited in influencing adolescents as they only worked well in school:

“[...] we [school staffs] cannot control students from eating fast food outside [school] before and after school (secondary school teacher in food and nutrition).”

The influence of **peer pressure** and the desire to be part of **peer groups** were also mentioned:

“Young people who eat fast food can be classified into two groups: one is the group of people who make this decision based on the food they would like to eat. The second is the group of people who come along with their friends [and to be part of that group] (fast food industry representative).”

Finally, stakeholders commented on the increase in the **availability and locations (particularly in shopping mall) of fast food restaurants, and increased neighbourhood availability of convenience stores** as being important in increasing fast food intake:

“Fast food restaurants are “right there”, next

to our school doors, offering a variety of food and sit-in environment [...] or with special delivery service [...] If they are located close to our school, they know they will get at least half of our students to be their customers (secondary school teacher).”

“A lot of tutoring centres are located in the shopping malls [...] they fill their stomachs up with fast food which is available on every floor of the mall (representative from the Teacher and Parent Association).”

“[The increased number of convenience stores] increases convenience for young people and makes them remember our brand name. This [in turn] increases their brand loyalty (fast food industry representative).”

These were confirmed by the fast food industry representative that young people used shopping malls as social spaces and deliberately located fast food restaurants there:

“[...] the mall is really a place where we can get our young targets. [...] They come here and usually do their activities after school or during weekend.”

However, some stakeholders from government and private sectors seemed to disagree with these views:

“[...] No matter how many stores we expand, if they do not want to buy food, they will not come. [...] They have to think before they come to the shop (convenience store chain representative).”

“An increase or decrease in fast food restaurants depends on their [adolescents] demands (Ministry of Public Health representative).”

#### ● **Media and advertising**

Stakeholders from government, non-government and private sectors all believed advertising fast food through the mass media is to be an effective way to attract and reach young customers quickly:

“[...] they [fast food companies] would have

to buy media where word of their food can reach customers quickly (the Ministry of Public Health representative).”

“[Television] is our main medium; it effectively reaches our target groups. [Television] sends a message to people pretty quickly and efficiently.”

#### **Views of stakeholders on approaches to reduce fast food intake in Thai adolescents**

Approaches discussed by the stakeholders are categorized into seven following themes.

##### **● Health education and health promotion**

There were differences between stakeholders in initiatives focusing on health education and promotion of healthy eating for Thai adolescents not only of the campaigns, but also how information should be promoted, and to whom. The representative from Consumer Foundation believed in educating young people about the influence of fast food companies on them while the representatives from education, health and NGO considered traditional Thai healthy food choices:

“This is a major challenge [...] to let them know their fundamental human rights, and see through fast food company’s tricks and learn to handle themselves responsibly.”

“[...] No matter what type of Thai food restaurants people open; [...] this type of restaurants should be supported in some way such as reducing food tax if possible (senior expert in food and nutrition policy).”

Using mass media such as television, with messages which are attractive is also essential to reach the target audience quickly:

“If targeting young people, the promotion should be more creative, and can catch their attention immediately (representative from convenience store chain).”

“[...] it [health education and promotion] should be a television drama about nutrition where

actors tell story about why you should not eat this food (representative from the advertising and marketing industry).”

##### **● Targeting the school setting**

Stakeholders from both the health and private sectors suggested that the school setting was important for future targeted action on adolescent diets:

“[...] targeting schools may be effective. [...] Schools are able to initiate projects which help students to put a lesson in a classroom into practice as well as helping them to apply nutrition lessons into their lives (fast food industry representative).”

In contrast, the civil society representative disagreed:

“[I] don’t believe in using rules or laws to discipline or manage young people, but I do [believe] in building an understanding about having healthy diets, together with being responsible for our young people.”

##### **● Improving intersectoral collaboration**

All interviewed stakeholders believed in increased intersectoral collaboration among government, non-government and private sectors for improving the chances tackling unhealthy diets in adolescents in the future:

“[There is a need for] partners from policy level to help support our work (representative from the Thais No Belly Network).”

“If we have strong collaboration among government, academics and NGOs, we can fight the food industry’s influence on young people (university professor).”

“If we can combine our knowledge with policy implementation, it will be useful (representative from the advertising and marketing industry).”

“I want a government sector to learn from the marketing experience of food companies about [...], how they know about youth’s diet behaviours including the ways youths think (civil society representative).”

● **Reducing the production, availability and impact of marketing unhealthy food**

Several public sector stakeholders mentioned the need for greater controlling media advertising especially to young people, setting healthy food contents (such as salt and fat levels) standards and, limiting the proximity of fast-food outlets to schools:

“First, media advertising should be controlled. [...] Other policies including food labelling, setting food standards in the market, [...] should also be implemented (ThaiHealth representative).”

“At least there should be policies for prohibiting fast food restaurants locating near academic institutions especially children schools (secondary school teacher).”

Although some stakeholders also believed in use of agricultural policies particularly growing healthy commodities and subsidies, senior experts in food and nutrition policy highlighted the challenges with regard to the policies:

“[...] several input factors should be considered [...] it is much more complex than you think and very long as well as not easy to control.”

“Agricultural products in the past determined food menus, but today the menus determine agriculture products.”

● **Developing the capacity of food and nutrition professionals**

Several stakeholders mentioned the need for developing greater professional capacity in supporting healthy eating policies including increasing the number and the skills of food and nutrition professionals:

“Because government employment is very limited, many staffers are hired temporarily. This causes their unsecured employment and early job leave after they got specialized training from us (university professor).”

“More support for existing experts in food and nutrition is needed in order to evaluate and follow up

research or work in food and nutrition in schools (the Ministry of Education representative).”

● **Improving the implementation of government policy**

Political factors such as political instability and non-transparency were considered by several stakeholders particularly government and NGO sectors stakeholders as crucial factors that affect the success of policy implementation, especially for policies giving politicians no benefits:

“Government cannot focus on what people really need if it is not what politicians in government have benefits on. [...] This affects government policy development and process, and implementation, which is a crucial factor to the success of policies in improving young Thai people diets (local government representative).”

“We cannot know when it [a change in new government] will be changed again and whether or not our work can proceed according to a plan (representative from the Thais No Belly Network).”

● **Supportive financial measures**

Improving financial support for diet policies was considered by stakeholders mainly from government and non-government sectors to be essential to the success for improving Thai adolescents’ diets:

“Financial support is another important factor to encourage and drive our staffs to produce research work effectively, efficiently and continually (university professor).”

“Of course, money is a key factor to move our work forward even though previously we worked without thinking of money. If [today] we cannot support financially, they [staff] will have to look for a better job. And there will be no one who really wants to work for us (civil society sector representative).”

**Discussion**

This study utilized semi-structured in-depth in-

interviews to access stakeholders' perceptions of factors influencing fast food consumption in Thai adolescents. Very little qualitative studies have addressed personal perceptions of people affecting or affected fast food consumption in Thai adolescents. This study can provide important insights into influences affecting fast food eating behaviours of Thai adolescents from the perceptions of stakeholders, including potential roles of stakeholders and their organisations in improving adolescent diets.

Findings from this study have identified potential policy approaches which are likely to be needed in order to increase the success of tackling unhealthy diets and reduce fast food intake in Thai adolescents as well as their implications for future policy recommendation in Thailand. Particularly, policies focus on health education and health promotion, targeting the school setting, improving intersectoral collaboration, reducing the production, availability and impact of marketing unhealthy food, developing the capacity of food and nutrition professionals, improving the implementation of government policy and supportive financial measures.

The data in this study appear to support a number of recommended approaches from international literature and international organizations such as World Health Organization.

**Health education and promotion** to reduce unhealthy dietary intake was proposed in the WHO global strategy on diet, physical activity and health<sup>(16)</sup>. Educational options for school children and the general adult population was also proposed to be effective particularly with improved access for information in the recent PORGROW project (which involved a wide range of stakeholders from nine EU member states)<sup>(17)</sup>. More interestingly, a strong support on this approach by private food industry stakeholders in this study might be qualified to specific types of message that the food industry often opposes ideas to intro-

duce "eat less" messages into policies related to dietary issues. The 'eat less message' appears to directly conflict with food industry demands which people eat more of their products<sup>(18)</sup>. Although accepting support from a food company does not necessarily mean that government endorses its products, the public may perceive the government as doing so, and undermine its independence. Thus, the challenge facing Thai government working with the private sector is to make explicit the potential for conflicts of interests, and to take steps to minimize such conflicts<sup>(18)</sup>.

**Increased intersectoral collaboration** approach was also proposed in the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health<sup>(16)</sup> suggesting that collaboration with civil society and non-governmental organisations can help to ensure that governments provide consumers with support for healthy lifestyles, and the food industry provide greater access to healthy products. In future, Thai policies should consider ways to improve intersectoral collaboration to improve implementation and effectiveness of dietary policies targeting adolescents. However, the Thai government must be attentive to clear evidence that specifically food companies have elsewhere tried to use every means at their disposal including legal, regulatory and societal to create and protect an environment that was conducive to selling their products in a competitive market place<sup>(18)</sup>.

Suggestion on **controls of marketing fast food to young people via television and the internet** by many stakeholders is a similar approach as proposed by various international organisations in the 2006 WHO Forum on the Marketing of Food and Non-alcoholic Beverages to Children, Oslo, Norway<sup>(19)</sup> and by stakeholders in the aforementioned PorGrow project<sup>(17)</sup> which focuses on restricting television advertisements of energy-dense, micronutrient-poor food to children. However, the Thai government will be required to consider the rights of individuals and food

industry and, as in other countries, is likely to have difficulties in balancing its role in protecting the public versus acting against the self interests of different influential private stakeholders<sup>(18)</sup>. Moreover, approach to avoid overlapping or unclear responsibilities for implementation and monitoring among the relevant government agencies may be useful to increase intersectoral collaboration among government agencies.

**Restricting locations where fast food outlets can be placed, specifically in school areas** are a similarly approach proposed by the National Heart Forum in the UK that restricting permission for takeaway food within close proximity to schools help shape the food choice on offer for students after school<sup>(20)</sup>. Unsurprisingly, there was no support for this policy by private sector stakeholders as it will clearly limit the freedom of the industry in increasing the number of fast food outlets across Thailand, and potentially will reduce access to school aged adolescents whom food industry viewed as a major target market<sup>(21-26)</sup>. To be stronger in avoiding resistance from fast food industry, a policy should be built on a solid scientific foundation and provide scientifically based information on the important relationship of environmental factors of food products, diet, nutrition and public health, as seen in case of the Norwegian food and nutrition policy where the dairy and meat industry in Norway finally curbed production to support low-fat milk instead of whole milk after the policy was clearly proved under strong scientific evidence<sup>(27)</sup>.

A lot of literature confirms the effectiveness of **school based policies** in improving student's dietary intake<sup>(28-30)</sup>. However, the support for restrictive school food policies from all sectors in this study, including the food industry, was surprising. This obviously appears to contradict the primary goal and actions of the fast food industry in targeting adolescent consumers (a key target group for marketing). This may be ex-

plained by recognition of the existing policy environment, where there already exists some school based policies restricting the sale of unhealthy food. The food industry may already acknowledge that the school setting is already limited in terms of their ability to increase the influence and availability of fast food products. In reality, the Thai food industry continues to target school-aged children and adolescents via other means<sup>(31,32)</sup>. Fast food providers may therefore support school based policies for a number of reasons including to gain public trust or to deflect attention from their other activities focusing on children.

The food industry used several lobbying methods to influence the policy agenda ranging from promoting rules or policies that are more “friendly” to industry, forming alliances to support lawsuits including libel actions against critics<sup>(18)</sup>. The government needs to be aware of potential conflicts of interest in industry support for school policies. In the future, strict ethical guidelines for government departments and officials in regulatory positions who deal with the food industry need to be considered, as recommended in the case of the USDA secretary<sup>(18)</sup>.

However, the major limitation of this study was that the perceptions of adolescents themselves were not investigated. Clearly, the topic of this study ideally requires an understanding of the factors influencing adolescents from their own perspective. Although Thai research identified some small scale surveys of Thai adolescents, there were no qualitative research studies. Clearly, future research will require a large in-depth qualitative study of Thai adolescents exploring some of the themes identified here. However, this study can still provide important insights into influences affecting fast food eating behaviours of Thai adolescents from the perceptions of stakeholders, including potential roles of stakeholders and their organisations in improving adolescent diets.

## Conclusions of findings and future research

In this study, the results have demonstrated that a broad range of factors is likely to be important in influencing the trend of increasing fast food intake in Thai adolescents. The study findings also suggest that the inter-relationships between this wide range of relevant factors and how they interact together to influence fast food intake in adolescents is complex. The causal pathways and effects are not clear from the literature, as they are potentially linked at several different levels from individual to environment. It is clear that a range of different policies will be needed to tackle this and improve unhealthy diets and reduce fast food intake in Thai adolescents. Although these may include policies in place in Thailand, and those suggested by stakeholders, they are likely to also require different approaches to developing interventions and policies which increasingly deal with multiple factors using intersectoral approaches.

Future research should be developed which investigates both the complex interactions between the possible risk factors for fast food consumption, and how multi-component or complex interventions may more effectively tackle the problem and improve adolescents' diets. This study has also raised a range of other future research needs in Thailand. The main issue is that very little research has been conducted involving adolescents themselves, on diet issues generally and fast food specifically.

In the future, a range of research approaches should be developed to explore this research area fully. This includes large scale surveys of children and adolescents, at national and regional levels, to explore knowledge, attitudes, self efficacy and other individual level factors potentially influencing diet habits, and how they vary by age, gender and socio-economic status. Qualitative research with adolescents, both in-depth interview and focus group studies, are also required to explore in more depth social, cultural and

environmental factors such as the role of peers, families, media and marketing in influencing dietary change and lifestyle choices. Finally, research could also be used to explore adolescents suggestions for interventions to promote healthy diets, and the acceptability and perception of current policies that are designed to target them.

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**บทคัดย่อ** การรับรู้ปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการบริโภคอาหารจานด่วนในเด็กไทย ของผู้มีส่วนเกี่ยวข้อง สิริินทร์ยา พูลเกิด\*, เซชีวิน ไนส์\*, คารน ร็อค\*\*

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วารสารวิชาการสาธารณสุข 2555; 21:10-22.

การศึกษาเชิงคุณภาพนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสำรวจการรับรู้ของผู้ที่เกี่ยวข้องจากภาครัฐ เอกชน และองค์กรอิสระเกี่ยวกับปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการบริโภคอาหารจานด่วนในเด็กไทย และข้อเสนอแนะเชิงนโยบาย เพื่อช่วยลดการบริโภคอาหารที่ไม่เหมาะสม ด้วยการสัมภาษณ์ผู้ที่เกี่ยวข้อง เพื่อสำรวจความคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการบริโภคอาหารจานด่วนในเด็กไทยและข้อเสนอแนะเชิงนโยบายที่เกี่ยวข้อง คือ ตัวแทนจากหน่วยงาน/องค์กรที่เกี่ยวข้องรวม 18 คน (10 คนจากหน่วยงานภาครัฐระดับประเทศ ภูมิภาค ท้องถิ่น 4 คนจากภาคประชาสังคม และ 4 คนจากภาคธุรกิจ) โดยใช้การวิเคราะห์แบบ Framework analysis เพื่อการเปรียบเทียบคำตอบของผู้ถูกสัมภาษณ์แต่ละคนในแต่ละคำถาม และพัฒนาแนวคำถามจากการทบทวนวรรณกรรม ในระยะเวลา 6 เดือนตั้งแต่เดือนพฤษภาคม - ตุลาคม 2552 จากผลการศึกษาพบว่า ผู้ที่มีส่วนเกี่ยวข้องรับรู้ว่า ราคา และการเข้าถึงง่ายของอาหารจานด่วน ทัศนคติเชิงบวกต่ออาหารจานด่วน อิทธิพลของครอบครัวและพ่อแม่ (เช่น การเปลี่ยนแปลงโครงสร้างครอบครัวไทย และพ่อแม่ไม่มีเวลาให้กับลูก) แรงกดดันจากเพื่อน นโยบายอาหารในโรงเรียน อาหารจานด่วนในโรงเรียน และสื่อและโฆษณา เป็นปัจจัยสำคัญต่อการบริโภคอาหารจานด่วนในเด็กไทย ซึ่งมาตรการการให้การศึกษาและการรณรงค์ด้านสุขภาพ, นโยบายเพื่อลดการผลิต การวางจำหน่าย และผลกระทบจากอาหารที่ไม่ดีต่อสุขภาพ และนโยบายเพิ่มบุคลากรด้านโภชนาการ ปรับปรุงความร่วมมือระหว่างภาคส่วน และสนับสนุนด้านงบประมาณเป็นแนวทางที่เหมาะสมที่จะช่วยลดการบริโภคอาหารที่ไม่ดีต่อสุขภาพ รวมถึงอาหารจานด่วนในเด็กไทยเป็นไปอย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ โดยสรุปคือ มีหลายปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการบริโภคอาหารจานด่วนในเด็กไทย ดังนั้นแนวทางการพัฒนาและดำเนินนโยบายเพื่อปรับปรุงพฤติกรรมบริโภคอาหารที่ไม่ดีต่อสุขภาพของเด็กไทยที่มีประสิทธิภาพในอนาคตควรครอบคลุมปัจจัยทั้งในระดับบุคคล สังคม และสิ่งแวดล้อม โดยอาศัยความร่วมมือระหว่างภาคส่วนมากขึ้น

**คำสำคัญ:** ผู้ที่มีส่วนเกี่ยวข้อง, การบริโภคอาหารจานด่วน, ปัจจัย, ข้อเสนอแนะเชิงนโยบาย