**Synopsis**

**Title: Automatic Attentional Responses to Food Advertisement: Eye-tracker Pilot**

**Study.**

**Study Reference Number: 2010C3751**

**Investigator Reference Number: 0210025**

**Brief Introduction to Project Goals:** This project is an eye-tracker pilot study to examine automatic attentional distraction produced by enhanced food images commonly used in commercial food advertising. Participants’ will be seated in front of a computer monitor and asked to read several short essays, on various topics (e.g., “Black holes”, “Natural history of Black Sea”). During this process their eye-movements and involuntary visual attention to text unrelated items (i.e., two commercial ads inserted in upper right and lower left corner of the screen) will be recorded. In addition to the text, each web page will contain two commercial ads, an ad for food item and another for non-food product (in experimental condition) or two non-food product ads (control condition). Presentation of each web page will be followed by few questions related to the text, in order to sustain participants’ engagement in the text reading task. The primary goal of this project is to pilot test the display material (web pages with ads) and the capacity of eye tracker to reveal hypothesized differences in involuntary visual attention triggered by food vs. non-food ads. If results are encouraging, we will plan to use this procedure in a larger scope, follow- up study. In addition to the main eye tracker task, the participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire consisting of (1) demographic items, (2) questions about our experimental task (i.e., web page reading task), (3) internet use and attitudes to communication technology scales, Wilkinson et al, 2010 and Meekerk et al., 2009, (4) Barratt Impulsiveness scale, Stanford et al., 2009, (5) Attentional Control Scale, Derryberry & Reed, 2002, and pre- and post-experimental task mood state assessment (see attached draft of the survey). During the completion of the survey following the eye-tracker task, participants’ will be offered pre-packed snacks (candy bars and crackers) to investigate changes in eating behavior after exposure to enhanced images of food in the food-ads (experimental vs. control condition comparison). Recently, such changes in eating behavior were reported in response to TV food advertisement (Harris et al., 2009).

**Answers to Synopsis Questions:**

1. Study participants will consist of approximately 60 college students recruited from undergraduate courses in the department of psychology. No exclusionary criteria will be employed.

2. The opportunity to participate in the study will be announced in classes of faculty granting us access to their students and willing to offer extra credit points for participation. Interested students will be asked to sign up for individual testing sessions. At the beginning of each testing session, researchers will obtain written, informed consent with explanation of the study purpose, procedure and participant’s rights (see attached) . In addition, trained research assistants (with completed IRB training) will be on hand to further explain the study and/or to answer any questions. Completed consent documents will be stored in locked offices of faculty supervising the project and no one other than the researchers will have access to these documents. The data (i.e., eye-tracker and survey responses) will be collected anonymously without possibility of linking participant’s responses to personal information on the consent form (i.e., participant name, course and email). It is anticipated that instructors will give extra credit for students’ participation in this study. If instructors will offer extra credit to students who participate in the study, then those instructors will also offer an alternative opportunity for extra credit to students who would like to receive extra credit, but do not want to participate in the study (see item 7 for more explanation).

3. The individual data collection sessions, approximately 45 minutes each, will be conducted in the computer lab (Derrick Hall 231). Upon arrival, a participant will complete a consent form and part one of the survey. Next, he/she will be seated in front of computer monitor with a chin rested on the eye-tracker head supporter (a comfortable support device to assure a standard distance from the screen and limited head movements). A research assistant will calibrate the eye-tracker for correct recording of eye-movements and display the first slide with instruction for the computerized task (see attached slides). After completion of the task, a participant will be asked to the move to adjacent lab area to complete the second part of the survey. On the table, next to the survey, scantron and pencil there will be a container with pre-packed snacks; participants’ will be invited to take as many snacks as they want. At the end participants will be thanked and reminded that the full study description with hypotheses and results will be email to them within two months (the email addresses will be compile from the consent forms; however we will not be able to trace them back to individual data sets). The data from each participant will be coded under a unique ID number entered at the beginning of each eye tracker session into the computer, survey response sheets (part I) and scantrons. The slides for the eye-tracker task and survey are attached.

4. The risks associated with participating in this project are minimal. The survey questions are not of intimate or emotional nature. In addition, any risk of discomfort will be addressed and minimized by reminding the participants (both verbally and in the consent document) that they are free to stop answering the questions or terminate eye-tracker task at any time with no repercussions. Similarly, they may skip any questions to which they do not wish to respond. Participants will be reminded that the study is anonymous and that their name will not be associated with provided responses in any way.

5. Risks will be minimized using the procedures indicated in item number 4. To assure participant anonymity, data will be coded with a participant identification number. Further, participants will be informed that, should these data be published in any form, the results will be described in a way that will not incriminate the participants. In other words, their names will not be mentioned in any capacity in any resulting manuscripts, presentations or publications.

6. Participants will have an opportunity to learn about (1) how experiments are conducted, (2) how eye-tracker operates, (3) automatic visual attention and (4) potential effects of food advertising with enhanced food images on cognition and eating behavior (item 3 & 4 from the debriefing emailed to participants after data collection). In addition, they will have the opportunity to obtain extra credit for participating in this project. They may also gain the satisfaction of knowing that they participated in research that could ultimately contribute to better understanding of environmental cues (i.e., enhanced images of food in ads) on food craving and unhealthy eating behavior.

7. As an incentive for participation, students will be offered extra credit. The exact number of extra credit points will be decided by the instructor of participating classes but will not exceed 3% of the total grade points. As an alternative to study participation, students will be able to earn the same amount of extra credit points by reading and summarizing in 1-2 pages a journal article on the internet use habits of college students. The article will be emailed to interested students and their response papers collected by project PI.

8. The risks of the project are quite minimal in relation to the possible benefit for subjects and society. It is important to increase our understanding of the “obesogenic environment” that contributes to unhealthy eating habits and promotes gaining weight.

9. N/A

10. N/A

11. N/A

12. N/A

13. Dr. Maria Czyzewska and her two undergraduate student research assistants (Ashley Nolan ,IRB # 1840044 and John Eric Vanston , IRB# 1589729) will have access to the results of the study , during and after completion. In addition, Dr. Oleg Komogortsev from the Computer Science department, who will provide technical support for the eye-tracker operation.

**Attachments:**

**1. Consent form.**

**2. Draft of the survey (2 parts) to accompany the eye-tracker task with color coded assessment scales and relevant references.**

**3. Slides for the eye-tracker task.**