Food rejections in preschoolers: where it comes from and how it can be modulated

Thèse

PhD :
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Preview :
  It has recently been shown that food rejections (food neophobia and picky/fussy eating) are associated to immature food categories in preschoolers. Additionally, it has been shown that preschoolers utilize both taxonomic and script categories for food. Taxonomic categories are organized into hierarchies of increasingly abstract categories, and are based on common properties or perceptual similarities. Script categories are formed when items play the same role in a schema for a routine event (e.g. a particular consumption context such the breakfast). Even if the children are able to categorize both ways, the respective impact of taxonomic and script categories on food rejections is still unknown. However, a reasonable hypothesis could be formulated on the basis of some parental practices. To overcome food rejections, parents generally tend to trigger a script category in generating a scenario. For instance, the carrot is presented to the child as an airplane landing on his/her tongue. The aim of the present project is twofold: i) to measure the respective influence of the ways of categorizing fruits and vegetables on food rejections and ii) then, from science to innovation, to design evidence-based interventions to facilitate the recognition of these foods, which in turn will foster acceptance.

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