

Short Communication

**Predictors of children's food selection: The role of children's perceptions  
of the health and taste of foods**

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contribute to children's food choices such as peers (e.g., [Frazier, Gelman, Kaciroti, Russell, & Lumeng, 2012](#)), parents, caregivers, and other adults (e.g., [Howard, Mallan, Byrne, Magarey, & Daniels, 2012](#)), all of whom are effective models in shaping children's food choices. The types of foods that are available and acceptable for children to eat are also determined by food advertising and marketing (e.g., [McGinnis, Gootman, & Kraak, 2006](#)), as well as the socio-cultural context including the child's family and feeding practices (e.g., [Rozin, 1996](#)).

Past research has also found that food selection is a function of the properties of the food itself. There are potentially many charac-

## Discussion

Overall, the present investigation suggests that taste trumps health in children's and young adults' food selection. The results revealed that there is a positive association between the participant's age and presumed taste ratings and food selection. However, the association between presumed taste and food selection exists uniquely above and beyond the variance accounted for by the participants' age, health ratings, the interaction between age and health ratings, and the interaction between age and presumed taste ratings. Thus, these results confirm the hypothesis that the taste is a more powerful determinant of food selection than its healthfulness and the age of the child and young adult. These results are in accord with previous research documenting the major influence of taste in food selection in children as well as adults ([Anliker et al., 1991](#)). Although the results of the present investigation might not be surprising in light of this previous research on taste, it is nevertheless striking given the paucity of research looking at the potential influence of cognitive appraisals on food selection. A major contribution of the present investigation

complex decision-making process, that there is a long list of other factors that influence children's food selection (see [Birch & Fisher, 1998](#); [Wardle & Cooke, 2008](#)). A large task in the coming years will be to identify the relative contribution of these factors in an effort to build a unified theoretical model of children's food selection that can facilitate the development of empirically based health and nutrition education interventions.

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