

## Understanding patterns of exposure to food packaging additives

### Is plastic fantastic in low-price food packaging?

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### Project description

Over the last couple of decades it has been found that low socio economic status (SES) households are more likely to have diets high in saturated fat, sugar and salt (De Fragas Hinnig et al., 2018). Food items that have longer shelf-life can be offered at lower prices than fresh foods, which makes it a logical choice for low income households. While the health implications of these food choices have been extensively studied from a nutrition point of view (e.g., Aslam & Varani, 2016; Francis & Stevenson, 2013; Gupta et al., 2016) the *levels of exposure* to toxic chemicals remains significantly under-researched. When fatty food items, such as oils, meat, dairy, come in contact with plastic the fat can absorb chemical additives from the packaging (Hahladakis et al., 2018; Muncke et al., 2020). Despite European packaging regulations, there has been little research on the *actual levels of exposure* to the sources of these chemicals. Similarly, there is little knowledge about the difference that income levels or degrees of awareness of possible exposure can make.

In this project, we will provide a first estimation of patterns and levels of exposure to sources of migrating chemicals (through packaging) particularly in low SES households.

### Job requirements

We are looking for a motivated student who is excited about conducting field work in low SES neighbourhoods to study this potential hidden health issue. The project involves walk-along interviews to get a sense of plastic food packaging use in this community, quantitative data collection on food purchases and writing of a research report.

### References

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