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| **Title of Research Presentation**: The morality of sugar consumption: australian adults’ perspectives on sugar in their diet. |
| **Background/Objectives:** Understanding why people make certain food choices, especially sweet food, is complex. This study draws on scholarship on the relationship between food choices and morality and in-depth qualitative interviews to explore how Australian adults conceptualize and negotiate their sugar intake.**Methods:** 15 in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted among English speaking adults residing in South Australia. The participants were purposively sampled from Australia’s National Dental Telephone Interview Survey 2016-2018 based on their sugar consumption levels (high or low), age and gender. The data were coded and analysed using thematic analysis.**Results:** We found that participants’ initially defined sugars as either good or bad based on the characteristics of the sugar including source, colour, texture and taste and the impact of sugar consumption on health. When provided with evidence of how much sugar they were consuming, participants redefined their perceptions to consider all sugars as bad sugars. This created moral challenges for the participants leading to two types of justifications for their sugar consumption. One group of justifications drew on socially evaluative statements that participants used to present themselves as morally virtuous. The participants explained that sugar is an essential source of energy and part of a balanced diet; that they limited their sugar consumption to infrequent occasions such as such as celebrations, social gatherings and cultural practices; and that sugar intake was sometimes a cultural obligation. The second group of justifications located the source of morality within the individual and presented sugar intake as important for emotional and psychological well-being, and also as something that could be controlled by taking responsibility through restriction, control, self-discipline and vigilance about their sugar intake.**Discussion:** This study provides new insights on how Australians conceptualise sugar in their diet and make decisions about consumption, which are important for influencing sugar consumption at a societal level. As moral negotiations are crucial elements influencing food choice and consumption behaviour, information on food and diet is likely to be perceived through a moral lens. Hence, creating an environment that promotes healthy eating by encouraging low sugar consumption, as the ‘new normal’ may be beneficial.**Keywords:** sugar consumption, qualitative, adults, healthy eating, morality |