

Departmental Research Seminar



Obesity and Self-Control:
Evidence from Food Purchase Data
By

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Venue : M802

Abstract

Is obesity related to self-control? We assess this question using a novel and unique dataset that links individual-level scanner data on food purchases to survey data containing questions about an individual's obesity status. We find that obese individuals have higher purchase shares of unhealthy goods, are more likely to purchase products offered in checkout lanes that exploit consumer temptation, and are more sensitive to price discounts in product categories that are both unhealthy and tempting. We find no differences in price sensitivity across obesity levels in comparable product categories that would not be considered tempting. We show that our empirical results are consistent with the model of self-control developed by Gul and Pesendorfer (2001, 2004), but do not find systematic support that more obese individuals are more myopic or present-biased, in contrast to earlier research.

Dr Matthew Osborne is an Assistant Professor of Marketing in the Department of Management at the University of Toronto Mississauga, with a cross-appointment to the Marketing Area at Rotman. His research interests include the development of modelling techniques to help understand consumer choices and firm behaviour. His research has focused on areas such as consumer choice of wireless carriers, consumer learning about new products, and how firms price in markets where transport costs are important. His research papers have been published in journals such as *The American Economic Review*, *Economics Letters*, *Quantitative Marketing and Economics*, and *the RAND Journal of Economics*.

All interested are welcome.

