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Food additives again shown to worsen children's behaviour – when will regulators act? asks Network

Research released today in the Lancet confirms worsening behaviour in children aged 3 to 9 caused by food colourings and a common food preservative.

“There is already considerable scientific evidence of these effects but this is the nail in the coffin for doubters” says Dr Howard Dengate of the Australia-based Food Intolerance Network.

“Regulators in Australia and food manufacturers will attempt to downplay this study of more than 300 children, but these findings from Southampton University are conclusive and raise the possibility of parents suing food manufacturers for using known harmful food additives.”

The researchers showed that adverse effects are seen in the general population and not just in children with hyperactivity such as ADHD.

The “significantly adverse” effects observed included tantrums, poor concentration and slow progress at school.

The additives tested included artificial colours widely used in Australian foods such as sunset yellow (number 110), carmoisine (122), tartrazine (102) and ponceau red (124) and the common preservative sodium benzoate (211).

Food industry leaders were summoned to urgent meetings with the UK food regulator yesterday but consumers are yet to be briefed.

All major UK supermarkets, including Marks & Spencer, Asda, Sainsbury's, Tesco and the Co-op, have already acted by promising to remove all artificial colours and some other additives by the end of the year.

“The Food Intolerance Network, with over 4,700 members, has been lobbying regulators and industry for the past 15 years about these behavioural and learning effects” said Dengate.

“The 20 food additives that the average consumer eats in a day are not tested on children before approval, nor are they tested for behavioural and learning effects, but in future they must be.”

“The advice for parents is to immediately remove these additives from your children's diet and always read the label” suggests Dengate.

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Further resources: www.fedup.com.au