

## Tekst 2

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### Letters

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## Consuming passions

- While correctly cautioning against a simplistic approach to tackling the new epidemic of obesity, John Miller (February 27) claims that becoming obese is a “voluntary act”. Such an assertion invites the question as to why there has been such a dramatic increase in “volunteers”.

Changes over the past 25 years have resulted in what may be called a toxic eating environment, characterised by ready access to food at any time, and supported by massive marketing efforts to celebrate constant consumption. The practice of offering larger sizes for an additional few cents contributes to the easy overconsumption.

Any serious strategy to combat obesity must avoid simply berating individuals for their “stupid” behaviour and must deal with these larger issues with a view to making healthy choices easy choices.

**Paul Fieldhouse**

Winnipeg, Canada

- In his letter attacking obese children for suing McDonald’s, John Miller neglected to mention that he has worked as a nutritional adviser to the company. Perhaps this is why he is so keen to see them absolved of any responsibility. He asserts that customers should know better, but completely ignores the role advertising plays in influencing food choices.

I was a defendant in a UK libel case brought by McDonald’s. In 1997 the London high court judge trying the case ruled that McDonald’s advertising had pretended to a positive nutritional benefit that their food did not match, and that the firm exploits children by using them to pressure their parents into going to McDonald’s.

Giving evidence during the trial, McDonald’s senior vice-president of marketing said that part of the company’s strategy was to target heavy users to increase their visits, and he agreed that the company could change people’s eating habits.

In the light of all this it is fairly easy to see the responsibility McDonald’s bears for its part in the increasing rates of obesity in the countries where it operates.

**Helen Steel**

London, UK

*International Herald Tribune*

## **Tekst 2 Letters: Consuming passions**

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- 1p 2 To which of the following do Paul Fieldhouse and Helen Steel both subscribe?
- A Responsibility for obesity ultimately lies with the consumers themselves.
  - B Tackling the problem of obesity includes addressing the part played in it by the food industry.
  - C The food industry would do itself a favour by promoting healthy choices.
  - D The media are reluctant to expose the influence of fast-food companies on people's eating habits.