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Intentionally forgotten food pictures are perceived less delicious.

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Abstract

Instruction to forget a memory after learning can lead to forgetting of the memory. This phenomenon is known as directed forgetting. Instruction to forget cause not only forgetting but also devaluation. Previous evidence demonstrated that pleasantness of to-be-forgotten words and faces decreased relative to to-be-remembered items. Here, we examined whether devaluation by directed forgetting is generalized to food. In our experiment, participants learned pictures of foods and then received instructions to forget or to remember them. Then, participants rated perceived deliciousness for half of to-be-remembered pictures and half of to-be-forgotten pictures. Finally, participants took an old/new recognition test for remained pictures. The results showed successful directed forgetting: memory performance of to-be-forgotten pictures was lower than that of to-be-remembered pictures. Additionally, a similar pattern was observed for deliciousness. Thus, instruction to forget induces devaluation as well as forgetting, suggesting that memory plays an important role in evaluating the deliciousness of food.