One doesn’t have to go far in newspapers, magazines, television, or social media to see the attention paid to pop culture and the celebrities who are a part of that culture. Young people wanting to emulate such celebrities may pay more attention than we do to whatever it is the pop music stars are endorsing—and sadly in many cases it may be food and drink products that are not the healthiest. But is this a perception or does the evidence support that last statement? Bragg et al. (peds.2015-3977) have undertaken an observational study of music celebrities who had hits on the Billboard Hot 100 chart and the food and drink products they endorse. The authors then evaluated the nutritional content of the foods and the added calories from sugar in the non-alcoholic beverages endorsed. The relative status of a celebrity was further classified using whether or not a celebrity warranted a Teen Choice Award nomination.

The results are tough to digest in that 65 of 163 celebrities endorsed a food or non-alcoholic beverage and the majority of foods were energy-dense and nutrient poor, and the beverages were high calorie and sugar-sweetened. So what can we do about this? Given the dollars celebrities opt to receive from these companies for their endorsement, direct communication with these famous people may not be the solution to stopping them from promoting unhealthy foods However, sharing the results of this study with your pre-teen and teen patients may be music to their ears and yours when it comes to their making healthy nutritional choices based on your advice, rather than the product being promoted by a celebrity. Hopefully these findings are food for thought that should be well noted by all of us who have a vested interest in tuning up our teens to make healthier nutritional choices than perhaps those endorsed by music celebrities.