

Development and validation of the children's emotional eating scale

Associations between the propensity to eat foods high in sugar and fat in response to negative emotions has been linked to a higher risk of obesity in multiple prior studies in adults. Emotional eating, however, has not been extensively studied in children, particularly among very young children from low-income families. Research suggests that low-income mothers of preschool-aged children believe that children in this age range can eat in response to their emotions; however, they tend to under-report the occurrence of emotional eating for their own children. Such findings could be due, in part, to the fact that the two most commonly-used questionnaires were developed in White, European populations. Due to contradicting evidence regarding the utility of current questionnaires to reliably assess emotional eating in very young children from low-income families in the United States, the focus of the current study was to develop such a scale. Specifically, we used a 2-aim, mixed methods, cross-sectional design to develop a valid tool for assessing emotional eating at a population level in very young children from low-income families. In our previous work, we qualitatively assessed how mothers from US-based low-income populations conceptualized the construct of emotional-eating in preschool-aged children. We then used that data to develop an inventory of items to capture the salient aspects of emotional eating. These items were assessed by a sample of mothers from

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