

FOOD INSECURITY LINKED WITH BINGE-EATING DISORDER AND OBESITY

December 19, 2018 - Food insecurity -- difficulty affording enough food to support regular, balanced meals -- was associated with increased likelihoods of binge-eating disorder and obesity in a recent International Journal of Eating Disorders study.

It is important to examine potential links between binge-eating disorder and food insecurity because binge eating is associated with more severe mental and physical health problems than overeating or obesity alone. To investigate, researchers surveyed 1,250 US adults and categorized them into three groups: healthy weight, binge-eating disorder, and obesity. The team assessed financial influences on participants' food consumption behaviors over the previous 12 months.

A greater proportion of individuals within the binge-eating disorder and obesity groups reported that they cut the size of their meal or skipped meals, and ate less than they thought they should, relative to participants in the healthy weight group.

“This is an important study because it expands our view as to who might be susceptible to binge-eating disorder,” said co-author Dr. Janet Lydecker, of the Yale School of Medicine. “Although we traditionally think about self-imposed dieting (to lose weight) as associated with binge eating, our findings suggest that externally-imposed restrictions on food are also related to binge eating.”

Full citation: Rasmussen G, Lydecker JA, Coffino JA, White MA, Grilo CM. Household food insecurity is associated with binge-eating disorder and obesity. International Journal of Eating Disorders, 2018; DOI: 10.1002/eat.22990

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