

JOINT EVENT

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&

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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 the target population for clarity and reliability. Those items demonstrating face- and content-validity, along with the child version of the Dutch eating behavior questionnaire, were then used to collect data from a sample of 200 participants from the target population. Results and conclusions will be discussed in detail during conference session.

Biography

Lenwood Hayman is an Assistant Professor of Public Health at University of Michigan, focuses on the psychosocial determinants of eating behaviors in under-privileged communities. Specifically, his research focuses on "The assessment of emotional eating (including stressed and bored eating) in preschool-aged children from low-income families". He has also worked with community-based organizations to demonstrate how increased participation in local food systems correlates with eating a healthier diet. Recently, he established the Mindful Promotion of Healthy Eating & Learning (Mind-PHEL) research team in which he studies the influence of mindfulness-based activities on healthy eating and positive student learning outcomes. He is involved in the process of developing a mindfulness-based intervention to encourage healthy eating behaviors in low-income communities.

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