May 16th, 1:45 PM

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Keywords
food studies, diet-related chronic conditions, latinos, emotional eating

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EMOTIONAL EATING IS ASSOCIATED WITH INTAKE OF ENERGY-DENSE FOODS IN LATINOS

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Background: Latinos experience profound health disparities in diet-related chronic conditions. Emotional eating (EE) has been positively associated with such conditions, however, little is known about the relationship between EE and energy-dense food intake that may influence risk for developing these conditions.

Objective: To examine associations between EE and energy-dense food intake in Latino men and women.

Methods: Latino individuals were recruited from a community health center in Lawrence, MA. Participants completed standardized assessments. EE was measured with the Three Factor Eating Behavior Questionnaire R18-V2. Dietary intake was measured with a culturally tailored Food Frequency Questionnaire. Energy-dense food groups defined as food groups exceeding 225 calories per 100 grams were identified. Covariates considered in this analysis included: age, sex, education, employment status and BMI. Statistical analysis consisted of multivariable logistic regression.

Results: A total of 201 participants were included in this analysis (53.7% female, 68.1% Dominicans). After adjusting for covariates, EE was significantly associated with high intake of sweet and/or fatty foods, namely dairy desserts (i.e., ice-cream, sherbet and frozen yogurt) (OR=1.55; 95%CI=1.08, 2.21; p=0.017), oleaginous fruits (i.e., nuts and seeds) (OR=1.44; 95%CI=1.01, 2.05; p=0.046) and baked goods (i.e., cakes, cookies, pies, doughnuts and muffins) (OR=1.54; 95%CI=1.07, 2.20; p=0.020).

Conclusion: EE was positively associated with consumption of energy-dense foods in this Latino sample. Future studies should examine longitudinal associations between EE, intake of energy-dense foods and risk of chronic health conditions. Understanding these associations can unveil potential intervention targets for Latinos at high risk of diet-related chronic health conditions.

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