

New research examines whether mindfulness can help tackle obesity

October 7 2020



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Researchers have developed a package of new tools to examine how mindfulness can help tackle rising obesity across the UK.

A team of psychologists at Birmingham City University, are leading new research looking at how mindfulness interventions can contribute to a healthy eating regime and improve advice, treatment and access to services.

Dr. Michael Mantzios and Dr. Helen Egan, readers in psychology at Birmingham City University, have created the package of new tools, which are designed to facilitate healthier eating, including the Mindful Construal Diary and the Mindful Chocolate Practice.

Designed for use whilst eating, the Construal Diary encourages mindful eating practices and previous research has demonstrated its effectiveness in moderating the intake of calorific foods as an alternative practice to the typical meditation-based interventions.

The Mindful Chocolate Practice uses traditional contemplative practices to encourage reflection on the experience of eating and the sensations that arise during this process.

Results demonstrated that people ate less chocolate both immediately after the [mindfulness](#) exercise and during an enforced waiting period at the end of the experiment.

Members of the public are being invited to access to tools, and to complete a survey to help contribute to the research.

Dr. Michael Mantzios, reader in psychology at Birmingham City University, said: "The research aims to assist a natural return to the habitual tendency to eat when our bodies are in need for food, so respond to physiological signals of hunger, and to create a mindful and pleasurable experience of every meal and snack that we consume.

"This way, we are enabling people to regulate the amount and quality of

the food they consume, and assist in overcoming typical pitfalls that are leading to obesity such as emotional or environmentally-induced (over)eating."

Around 62% of the UK population is classed as overweight and 25% as obese, according to Health Express, which can lead to potentially life-threatening conditions such as Type 2 Diabetes and strokes, as well as a decrease in quality of life and depression.

The NHS spends £5.1 billion a year on treating [obesity](#) and related illnesses. Therefore, addressing behaviour that leads to overeating is high priority for the healthcare sector and the government.

Provided by Birmingham City University

Citation: New research examines whether mindfulness can help tackle obesity (2020, October 7) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-10-mindfulness-tackle-obesity.html>

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