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THE ROLE OF CHILD TEMPERAMENT IN CHILDREN'S OBESOGENIC EATING BEHAVIOURS: DATA FROM MOTHERS AND FATHERS

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ABSTRACT TEXT

Background: Many parental factors, including their feeding practices and psychopathologies, have previously been related to children's eating behaviours, but the contribution of child temperament has received less research attention. The current study aimed to examine whether mothers' and fathers' reports of their child's temperament were associated with the obesogenic eating behaviours that they reported their child to engage in. **Method:** Fifty-eight mother-father pairs of young children (mean age 39 months) completed self-report measures of their children's temperament and eating behaviours. The parents also provided data on their child's height and weight. Associations between children's temperament and eating behaviours were considered separately for mothers' and fathers' reports. **Results:** Where fathers reported that their children were more emotional, they also reported that their children tended to eat more in response to emotions and were more responsive to satiety cues. Fathers also reported that active children were less responsive to food. Mothers who reported their child to be less shy and more sociable also reported that their child enjoyed food more. Greater responsiveness to internal satiety cues was evidenced in children whose mothers considered them to be more shy and emotional. **Conclusions:** These data suggest a link between temperament and children's ability to regulate their food intake. That temperamentally less active children were perceived as more responsive to food may be an important step in our understanding of children's external eating.

1. Conflict of Interest

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