

## Overview

Latinos are more likely to be obese than non-Latino whites. Overeating or eating too much is a major contributor to obesity. Emotional eating, such as eating because of feeling anxious or sad, is also linked with obesity and with eating high-calorie foods (energy-dense foods) such as cookies, ice cream and pizza. However, we don't know whether there is a relationship between emotional eating and overeating, or whether eating high-calorie foods may explain a relationship between these two variables.

## Main Questions

- Is there an association between emotional eating and overeating among Latinos?
- What role does eating foods high in calories potentially play in this relationship?

## Study

This study included a group of 200 Latino adults in Lawrence, Massachusetts who participated in the Latino Health and Well Being Study. The study assessed demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, employment, education, perceived income); stress; health history; height and weight; emotional eating (using a subscale of the Three Factor Eating Questionnaire R18-V2); overeating (defined as eating 500 calories over daily caloric needs) and high-calorie food consumption (via a food frequency questionnaire).

## The Bottom Line

In this Latino sample, emotional eating was linked with higher chances of overeating. The consumption of high-calorie foods explained this association.

## Research Collaborators

The study involved a partnership among the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, the Lawrence Senior Center, the YWCA of Greater Lawrence, the City of Lawrence Mayor's Health Task Force, and the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

**Source:** Lopez-Cepero A, Frisard CF, Lemon SC, Rosal MC. Association between emotional eating, energy-dense foods and overeating in Latinos. *Eat Behav.* 2019 Mar 7;33:40-43. doi: 10.1016/j.eatbeh.2019.03.001. PMID: 30889426

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## Spotlight on Results

- Approximately 60% of the study participants were emotional eaters and 45% engaged in overeating.
- Emotional eating was significantly associated with overeating. For each increase of one point in the emotional eating scale, the chances of overeating increased by 23%.
- Consumption of high-calorie foods accounted for 32% of this relationship.

## Call for Action

Interventions that target emotional eating and consumption of high-calorie foods may help prevent and manage obesity among some Latino adults.