Emotions and food intake

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Objective
Verify the influence of negative emotions in the energy consumption of sweet and savory foods in women with overweight and normal weight.

Method
Experimental study involving 33 healthy adult women who did not use psychotropic medications, 19 volunteer overweight (BMI higher than 25 kg/m²) and 14 normal weight women (BMI between 18.5 and 24.9 kg/m²) divided into nine groups, ranging from three to four members.

All groups were submitted to two interventions with videos on different days with an interval of two days. A video containing scenes that trigger negative emotion and one with neutral scenes, seen as neutral intervention with emotion. After the presentation of the videos, the participants were offered an ad libitum snack containing several typical Brazilian foods, including sweet and savory food.

Dietary intake was assessed by the difference between the average and the raw snack quantification. After scoring the food consumed by the group, the number of total consumption was divided by the number of members of the group, constantly establishing the average per capita. To calculate the energy density of foods offered the Brazilian Food Composition Table was used. Thus, we compared the total energy density consumed and food choice on the emotions by groups and evaluated the difference in food consumption between groups.

Results
After the negative emotion, the average energy density consumed by participants overweight increased 48.6% compared to the average energy density consumed after neutral intervention, showing a significant difference between the neutral consumption and consumption with emotion. Already eutrophic participants did not have a significant increase in energy intake, considering that the increase was only 9.0%.

The food choice is presented evenly between sweet and savory food and interventions in both groups, i.e., there was no difference between the amount of sweet and savory foods consumed during interventions in both groups. This shows that the group with overweight increased consumption of both types of food offered, expressing a lack of favoritism between sweet and savory in consumption after negative emotion.

Conclusion
The results show that women who are overweight tend to increase energy intake on negative emotions, unlike the normal weight who did not show a significant increase. Moreover, it was seen that the increase in food consumption in the presence of negative emotions by participating overweight is widespread, indicating no specific preference for sweet or salty foods.

The effect of social desirability on eating behaviour among Portuguese higher education students

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Social desirability is defined as the tendency to transmit a culturally accepted image, according to social norms. Individuals with high social desirability search approval and avoid criticism in situations of test. Therefore, social desirability may bias parameters evaluated in scientific research, especially self-reported parameters, leading individuals to provide answers believed to be socially accepted and to avoid an association with opinions or behaviours socially disapproved. Few studies have focused on the effects of social desirability on eating behaviour evaluations. Moreover, the results from these studies lead us to assume that social desirability is likely to explain partially the relationships found between eating behaviour dimensions. However, to our knowledge, there are no works studying specifically the effect of social desirability on the relationships between eating behaviour dimensions.

Our aims were to relate social desirability with eating behaviour dimensions among Portuguese higher education students, and to assess the effect of social desirability on the association between pairs of eating behaviour dimensions.

Data from 266 higher education students (62.8% females) aged between 18 and 27 years were evaluated. Social desirability and several eating behaviour dimensions (emotional eating, external eating, flexible and rigid control of eating behaviour, binge eating, and eating self-efficacy) were assessed. The effect of social desirability on the association between eating behaviour dimensions was made by comparing these associations with similar partial correlations controlled for social desirability.