

Research suggests that mindful eating may be helpful for reducing overeating

November 13 2015, by George Wigmore



City academics and students from the Centre of Psychological Wellbeing and Neuroscience are collaborating with the North East London NHS Foundation Trust to see if Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) can prevent relapse or recurrence of depression in people with obesity.

Obesity – classed as a Body Mass Index (BMI) of above 30 - is a major public health problem in the UK as it increases the risk for long-term health problems such as diabetes, [heart disease](#), hypertension, [high cholesterol](#) and dementia. Recent studies have also shown that [obese people](#) had a 55% increased risk of developing depression over time, whereas depressed people also had a 58% increased risk of becoming obese.

As Mindfulness-based [cognitive therapy](#) (MBCT) is an effective depression prevention programme for people with a history of recurrent depression, the team - including Dr Katy Tapper and an MSc student from the Department of Psychology – are investigating whether the same techniques can prevent depression relapse for people in a primary care setting suffering from [obesity](#).

As part of the evaluation, participants will complete the assessment measures before and after the 10 week intervention, and then at three and six month later. Sessions will begin with a centering exercise designed to increase mindfulness, with discussions around certain key mindfulness eating principles and nutritional information. The study is part of the project for a student on the newly created MSc in Clinical, Social and Cognitive Neuroscience.

Speaking about the study, Dr Katy Tapper, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Psychology at City University London, said:

"Research suggests that mindful eating may be helpful for reducing overeating and binge eating but there is less evidence for its clinical effectiveness. We hope that this research will provide important information on the extent to which such an approach can help prevent relapse of depression amongst those suffering from obesity, as well as promote healthy eating behaviours."

Provided by City University London

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