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Let them eat cake: what foods do we have trouble avoiding?

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LET THEM EAT CAKE: WHAT FOODS DO WE HAVE TROUBLE AVOIDING?

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AIM: This study aimed to evaluate the prevalence of food addiction amidst persons of the general population, as determined by the Yale Food Addiction Scale (YFAS). This study also aimed to assess the influence of demographic variables on the presence of a food addiction diagnosis.

METHOD: A cross-sectional study design was utilised. All participants (n = 118) were invited to participate in the study via an online 'Survey Monkey' link. All surveys were individually scored according to the dichotomous version of the YFAS, which determines either the presence or absence of food addiction. Statistical analysis was used to assess whether demographic variables (gender, age, employment status, language background and long-term health conditions) influenced the prevalence of food addiction.

RESULTS: The majority of participants had no diagnosis of food addiction (90.68%). Amongst the 11 (9.32%) participants who met the YFAS criteria for a diagnosis of food addiction, the majority reported living with a long-term mental health condition (81.82%). There was a statistically significant relationship between a diagnosis of food addiction and the presence of a long-term mental health condition (U = 173, p < .000). There was no statistically significant relationship between a diagnosis of food addiction and gender (U = 523, p = .426), age (U = 547, p = .700), employment status (U = 492, p = .367), language background (U = 584, p = .939) or the presence of a long-term physical health condition (U = 462, p = .088).

CONCLUSION: The prevalence of YFAS-diagnosed food addiction amongst this pool of the general population was consistent with prior literature. Given the supporting evidence for the prevalence of food addiction furnished by the results of this study, this therefore justifies the clinical need for further research into the epidemiology of, and risk factors for, food addiction.