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Chronic Stress and Obesity: Psychology, Nutrition and Modern Lifestyle Behavior

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Message from the Guest Editors

Dear Colleagues,

Chronic psychological stress is an integral part of our lives and has an adverse effect on our health. The mechanism linking psychological stress and chronic disease is closely related to our food choices and habits, leading to obesity. Furthermore, the relationship between psychological stress and excessive weight gain is multi-dimensional. Long-term stress can interact with genetic predisposition and affect the neuroendocrine response of the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal (HPA) axis and the sympathetic nervous system (SNS), epigenetic modulation and the gut microbiome environment to promote obesity. Chronic psychological stress also influences overall food intake. Chronic stress has been shown to be related the consumption of high amounts of refined sugars and saturated fatty acids, called “comfort food”. In the short term, this food helps decrease the emotional stress response; however, this increased intake of energy-dense foods leads to excessive weight gain, which is enhanced by biological responses to stressors. Excessive body weight has become a major public health concern in high-income countries.



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