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MSU Reports on Racine Research on ‘Impulsivity and Binge Eating’

June 1, 2015

Categories: Faculty in the News, In the News

Tags: BEEP Lab, faculty in the news, in the news, psychology news, psychology research, Sarah Racine

Dr. Sarah Racine, Assistant Professor of Psychology, talks about a paper she co-authored in a May 28 story on [“Impulsivity and Binge Eating.”](#)



Dr. Sarah Racine

Racine is the lead author on [“Examining associations between negative urgency and key components of objective binge episodes,”](#) which appeared April 10 in the *International Journal of Eating Disorders*.

[Racine’s research](#) examines the ways in which biological and psychological risk factors intersect to influence the etiology and maintenance of eating disorder psychopathology. She uses several methodological approaches to examine biological risk (e.g., behavioral genetic, molecular genetic, neuroendocrinology, and psychophysiology methods), and she focuses on key psychological factors specified in well-established models of eating disorder development/maintenance. Much of her work thus far has focused on a transdiagnostic eating disorder symptom: binge eating.

Do you get impulsive when you’re upset? If so, this could be putting you at risk for binge eating.

According to Kelly Klump, professor of psychology at Michigan State University and senior author, the more impulsive you are, the more likely it is you’ll binge eat when experiencing negative feelings.

“It’s human nature to want to turn to something for comfort after a bad day, but what our research found is that the tendency to act rashly when faced with negative emotions is a personality trait that can lead to binge eating,” Klump said....

What’s more, it’s not just those with binge eating who act impulsively when upset. “Both overeating and feeling out of control when eating small or normal amounts of food were related to rash action when experiencing negative emotions,” said **Sarah Racine**, assistant professor of psychology at Ohio University and lead author on the research.

Although negative urgency was high in those people who set out to overeat and those who lose control when eating, Racine believes there may be different factors at play for these two types of problem eating.

“It is possible that relationships between binge eating and negative urgency reflect impairments in behavioral control over eating when upset,” said Racine. “Overeating may instead represent increased sensitivity to rewarding effects of food in the context of negative emotions.”

Read more in the Michigan State University story on [“Impulsivity and Binge Eating.”](#)