

The influence of oxytocin on eating behaviour and stress in bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder: A double-blind, placebo-controlled crossover study

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Authors

Janet Treasure, Monica R. Leslie, Valentina Cardi, *King's College, London, UK*

Aim

This project aims to test the novel hypothesis that a single dose of intranasal oxytocin reduces caloric consumption and stress among individuals with bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder, as measured immediately and over the subsequent 24-hour period.

Background

There is a long-standing evidence base demonstrating that oxytocin administration inhibits appetite in animals. More recently, research has gone on to demonstrate that oxytocin specifically reduces hedonic eating in healthy men, and may reduce total caloric consumption in individuals with bulimia nervosa. However, findings in bulimia nervosa are as yet inconclusive, and the mechanism of action of oxytocin is unknown.

Method

60 participants (30 with bulimia nervosa or binge eating disorder and 30 healthy controls) will each come into the lab on two occasions in a within-subjects crossover design. This study will compare food consumption and self-reported stress after intranasal oxytocin administration versus a placebo nasal spray. fMRI will be employed in order to examine the neural mechanism of action of oxytocin.

Execution

June 2016 - June 2019

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