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SUBMISSION ABSTRACT

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Title

Development and validation of a scale to evaluate the level of mindful eating in the general French population

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Abstract (350 words including headings)

Purpose : Mindful eating defines a non-judgmental awareness of physical and emotional sensations experienced while eating. Studies show promising evidence of an association with healthier eating behavior and lower weight status. However, existing scales assessing the level of mindful eating are not exhaustive (e.g. environment or emotions aspects are lacking) or have specific methodological limits. Our objective was therefore to develop and validate a scale assessing the level of mindful eating in the general French population.

Methods : Items were created and administered to a representative sample of the general population of the NutriNet-Santé cohort. The construct validity was assessed with exploratory (EFA) and confirmatory (CFA) factor analyses. Goodness of fit was assessed by chi-square index by degrees of freedom (χ^2/df); comparative fit index (CFI); Tucker-Lewis index (TLI); root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA); and standardized mean square residual (SRMR). Convergent validity was estimated by correlation with other closely related scales. Discriminant validity was assessed in groups of individuals with varied sociodemographic and lifestyle profiles. Internal consistency and test-retest reliability were also examined.

Results : An EFA was performed on a subsample of 1302 individuals and highlighted seven dimensions: attention, hunger/satiety, non-reactivity, emotions, non-judgment, openness, connectedness with four items per dimension. A CFA was performed on 1302 individuals and the results suggested a good fit of the model: $\chi^2/df = 3$; CFI = 0.97; TLI = 0.96; and RMSEA = 0.04; SRMR = 0.06. Mindful eating scores were higher for men and older individuals. A higher mindfulness eating score was associated with a lower score of cognitive restriction (TFEQ-R21) and depression (CES-D), and with a higher score of nutritional quality (mPNNS-GS), mindfulness (FFMQ), self-esteem (RSES), satisfaction with life (SWLS), optimism (LOT-R), gratitude (GQ-6) and resilience (BRS). The internal consistency of the questionnaire was satisfactory (McDonald's $\omega = 0.82$) and the test-retest reliability was good (ICC = 0.86).

Conclusions : This study validated the first tool for assessing the level of mindful eating in general French population. This work opens the way to clinical and epidemiological research on this subject in the coming years.