

From: **Charles O'Brien** <obrien@mail.med.upenn.edu>
Date: Wed, Jun 27, 2012 at 4:41 PM
Subject: Response to the question on "food addiction"
To: pwevergreen@comcast.net
Cc: Tim Walsh <btw1@columbia.edu>

Dear Mr. Werdell,

Thank you very much for your comments regarding food addiction at the APA meeting in Philadelphia and for the material you have sent us. This information has been shared with both the Eating Disorders and the Substance Use Disorders Work Groups.

We share your interest in understanding how eating behavior can take on characteristics that strongly resemble the behavior of individuals who abuse substances such as cocaine. It is likely that this resemblance reflects the fact that neurobiological systems involved in the processing of reward are disturbed in both groups of disorders. The problem is that, at present, the precise nature of these disturbances and how the neurobiology of eating disorders resembles and differs from the neurobiology of Substance Use Disorders is unknown. We, and the members of our Work Groups, wholeheartedly endorse research to understand this important overlap.

As you undoubtedly know, changes recommended for DSM-5 are based on established scientific knowledge and published literature. This is particularly important in justifying the recognition of new disorders. For example, over 1000 papers have been published on Binge Eating Disorder since that syndrome criteria was first proposed almost 20 years ago in DSM-IV, and it is that body of science that will likely justify the official recognition of Binge Eating Disorder in DSM-5. Therefore, we believe that a critical next step is to do the research to understand these phenomena, how they can be applied clinically, and whether it would be useful to include a food addiction category in future revisions of DSM.

Thank you again for your interest and comments.

Best wishes,

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