

## CAN FOOD BE AN ADDICTION? A RECENT DEBATE

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**Introduction:** Binge eating shares some similar clinical features with addictive disorders, such as impulsivity, altered reward sensitivity, and compulsive behavior. Some authors support the concept of food addiction for both conditions, whereas others argue against it.

**Objectives:** To review arguments in favor or against the concept of food addiction, and its relation with bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder.

**Aims:** To discuss and explore the concept of food addiction, and how it may be related to bulimic-type behaviors.

**Methods:** MEDLINE and PubMed databases were searched for peer-reviewed studies undertaking analyses of evidence in favor or against the concept of food addiction, published between 2000 and 2012, by using combinations of the Medline Subject Heading terms addictive behavior and bulimia.

**Results:** Several arguments in favor of the concept of addictive properties of food are present in many of the reviewed articles. However, many differences between substance addiction disorders and the so-called “behavioral addictions” are reported in the literature, underlining different neurobiological, psychological, and environmental mechanisms.

**Conclusions:** There is no consensus in the current literature regarding the concept of food addiction. Further studies concerning the issue are, therefore, warranted.