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Brain and Food Motivation, Choice, and Eating Behavior

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Message from the Guest Editors

Eating involves a broad array of behaviors and is essential to the survival, growth, and reproduction of each organism. It can be distinguished in metabolic and motivational (i.e., appetitive and rewarding) components. Most people know when, how much, and what to eat, while others find eating very difficult to control. During the past half-century, eating disorders, in their various diversified and complex forms (i.e., anorexia nervosa and binge eating disorders), as well as overweight/obesity and other diet-related disorders, have assumed the entity of a real social emergency due to the deleterious effects that they exert on the physical and mental health of the affected individuals. Although research in this field has increased dramatically, there is still a need to broaden the knowledge both on the neurobiological correlates of “normative” eating behavior and concerning the etiology that underlies these disorders. A growing body of evidence highlights the crucial role of an altered reward/motivation function in response to food (and the associated cues) in subjects with a deranged eating behavior.

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