

# **Exam stress and emotional eating among Lebanese university students: A correlational study.**

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## **Abstract**

**Background:** Integrating university students into an academic environment can be intense, with significant intellectual and emotional challenges. Stress, particularly during exam periods, plays a crucial role in students' eating habits, often influencing their food choice through mechanisms such as emotional eating.

**Objective:** This study aims to understand the impact of exam stress on emotional eating among university students in Lebanon,

**Methodology:** A cross-sectional study was conducted among 700 students aged 18 to 25 years in Lebanon, using online questionnaires to assess perceived stress using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and emotional eating behaviors with the Dutch Eating Behavior Questionnaire (DEBQ). Data were analyzed to identify correlations between stress and emotional eating.

**Results:** A significant positive correlation was observed between levels of perceived stress and increased emotional eating, with marked differences depending on participants' gender and field of study. This trend highlights the concerning impact of academic stress on students' food choices, including an increased prevalence of emotional eating among women and those studying in demanding disciplines like health sciences and engineering.

**Conclusion:** This research contributes to the understanding of the complex links between academic stress and emotional eating behaviors among university students in Lebanon. To improve the mental and physical health of students, it is essential to implement tailored educational and support initiatives aimed at reducing stress and promoting balanced dietary choices in learning environments.