

Pleasure, pursuit of health or negotiation of identity? Personality correlates of food choice motives among young and middle-aged women.

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The clustering of four food choice motives (health, weight concern, pleasure and ideological reasons) and the relationship between personality and the food choice motives were analysed among young and middle-aged women in two studies. The personality variables included personal strivings, magical beliefs about food, awareness and internalization of thinness pressures, appearance and weight dissatisfaction, depression, self-esteem and symptoms of eating disorders. Study 1 was done with 171 young and middle-aged women. In Study 2, with data provided by 118 senior high-school girls, one cluster of girls who did not regard any of the food choice motives as important was found, otherwise the food choice clusters were fairly similar in both studies. They were labelled as health fosterers, gourmets, ideological eaters, health dieters and distressed dieters. Only the second dieter group, distressed dieters, showed low psychological well-being and symptoms of disordered eating. The results also indicated that ideological food choice motives (i.e. expression of one's identity via food) were best predicted by vegetarianism, magical beliefs about food and health, and personal strivings for ecological welfare and for understanding self and the world. Copyright 1999 Academic Press.

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