

AQA Psychology A-level

Option 2: Eating Behaviour Flashcards

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Why do humans have an innate preference for sweet things?



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Sweet foods are associated with readily accessible sugar and calories, for early humans, as source of this would have been ripe fruit. These fruits provide nutrients important for vital body functions, so as a result, it would be adaptive for them to develop a preference for sweet foods.



Explain evolutionary explanations for food preference.



Explain evolutionary explanations for food preference.

This focuses on the adaptive nature of behaviour, the fact that modern behaviours are believed to have evolved as they solved challenges faced by our early ancestors. As a result, these traits become widespread in the gene pool.



Why is taste aversion adaptive?



Why is taste aversion adaptive?

This is a learned response to eating food that may be toxic, spoiled or poisonous. Such a response prevents someone from eating the food that made them sick in the future, helping them survive.



Why can taste aversion be maladaptive?



Why can neophobia be maladaptive?

Restricting your diet due to a fear of trying new foods can potentially prevent individuals from receiving sufficient nutrients.



What is ghrelin?



What is ghrelin?

This is a hormone that plays a role in appetite, it is released in the stomach and stimulates the hypothalamus to increase appetite. Levels of Ghrelin increase when a person's bodily resources are low.



Define neophobia.



Define neophobia.

This is an extreme dislike and avoidance of anything that is novel.



How does the SLT explain eating behaviour?



How does the SLT explain eating behaviour?

Children acquire their eating behaviour in part from observing the behaviour of others, and then imitating this behaviour.



Define anorexia nervosa.



Define anorexia nervosa.

This is an eating disorder in which an individual, despite being severely underweight erroneously fears that they may become obese. As a result of this, they starve themselves to prevent this from happening.



How does the biological theory explain obesity.



How does the biological theory explain obesity.

Obesity tends to run in families, with similar body mass indices being transmitted from parents to offspring. In addition to this, low levels of dopamine have been implicated in obesity, this is because serotonin sends satiated signals to the hypothalamus after we have eaten, which disinhibits eating behaviour, causing carbohydrate cravings that cause weight gain by consumption of excess calories.



What is the role of leptin in diet?



What is the role of leptin in diet?

This is a hormone that plays a role in both appetite and weight control, this is produced by adipose (fat) tissue and secreted into the bloodstream. Its role is to decrease appetite.



How does culture influence diet?



How does culture influence diet?

According to classical conditioning, we associate many foods that we eat as adults with happiness that we experienced whilst growing up. This may be because eating a certain food meant that relatives were coming over, and this enjoyable experience creates an association between the food and happiness.



How is serotonin involved with anorexia nervosa?



How is serotonin involved with anorexia nervosa?

Serotonin has been implicated in certain behaviours like obsessiveness. Low levels of 5-HiAA (the metabolite of serotonin) have been found by Bailer and Kaye (2011) in anorexics, indicating that there is a reduced serotonin in individuals with anorexia nervosa.



Describe the family systems theory of anorexia nervosa.



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The family systems theory is a psychodynamic explanation devised by Minuchin et al that suggests that families are a complex system and all interactions between family members become centred around the anorexic individual. As a result of this, this distracts attention away from any pre-existing family conflicts.



Define enmeshment.



Define enmeshment.

This describes a family where parents are involved to an excessive extent with their children, but may be dismissive of their own emotional needs. This makes it difficult for children to develop independence, this is used to explain eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa.



What is disinhibition?



What is disinhibition?

This is the removal of normal inhibitions in regards to overeating, and this results in the tendency to overeat in reaction to the range of different stimuli.



Define dieting.



Define dieting.

This is the deliberate reduction of food intake in attempts to lose weight/ prevent weight gain.



Why is dieting sometimes unsuccessful?



Why is dieting sometimes unsuccessful?

Dieting often begins in adolescence, when low self-esteem leads to a desire to lose weight. There is initial success but weight is often regained. As a result of this, the individual begins to feel deficient, as if they haven't tried hard enough. This creates a downward spiral in which dieters make bigger attempts to diet, which in turn makes them more vulnerable to disinhibited eating.



How is dopamine involved with anorexia nervosa?



How is dopamine involved with anorexia nervosa?

HVA (the metabolite of dopamine) was found to be lower in individuals who has recovered from anorexia nervosa than control groups. Eating food increases dopamine, which was found by Bailer (2012) to cause anxiety in anorexic individuals. So they do not eat, to reduce these feelings of anxiety.



Describe the restraint theory.



Describe the restraint theory.

This is the conscious restriction of food intake to prevent weight gain or loss, this proposes that attempts to restrain eating actually increase the likelihood of overeating.



Define food preference.



Define food preference.

This refers to the way that people choose from available foods on the basis of biological and learned perceptions such as taste, health characteristics, culture etc. This was developed as a defence mechanism by our early ancestors.

