Methods to assess ambivalence towards food and diet: a scoping review

Daisuke Hayashi Neto[1] Samantha D.L. Carvalho[1] Paula A.B. Ribeiro[2] Kim L. Lavoie[2,3] Simon L. Bacon[2,4] Marilia E. Cornélio[1]

[1]School of Nursing (FEnf), University of Campinas (UNICAMP), Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil, [2]Montreal Behavioural Medicine Centre (MBMC), CIUSSS-NIM, Montreal, QC, Canada, [3]Department of Psychology, University of Quebec at Montreal (UQAM), Montreal, QC, Canada, and [4]Department of Health, Kinesiology, and Applied Physiology, Concordia University, Montreal, QC, Canada

Background

The assessment of ambivalence towards food and diet-related objects can be important when studying determinants of eating behaviors or planning behavioral interventions.

Objective

Mapping and describing the different methods and tools available to assess, measure, or classify the ambivalence of participants towards food and diet-related attitude objects.

Methods

This review was conducted in accordance with JBI methodology for scoping reviews. We retrieved peer-reviewed studies from MEDLINE, CINAHL, PsycINFO, Web of Science, FSTA, and Food Science Source.

Results

We included a total of 38 studies published between 1992 and 2021. These studies were conducted with participants from 16 different countries. Most studies only included participants above the age of 18 or university students. We identified a total of 24 different attitude objects across studies. Eleven studies employed methods to assess ambivalence that were specific for food and diet-related objects, and 30 studies employed methods also usable to assess ambivalence in other contexts unrelated to food or diet. The studies employed methods to assess different forms of ambivalence, i.e., potential ambivalence, felt ambivalence, and cognitive-affective ambivalence.

Conclusion

Although there isn't a consensus about the best way to assess ambivalence, there are several methods and tools available in the literature to assess different types of ambivalence. This scoping review provides authors of future studies and healthcare professionals with an

array of options to choose from when planning to assess, measure, or classify the ambivalence of study participants towards food and diet-related objects, and maps which ones are most frequently employed.