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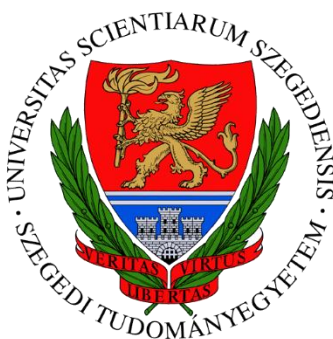
HEALTH EDUCATION RESEARCH PROGRAMME

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**EXAMINATION OF EATING BEHAVIOR AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN THE LIGHT
OF EATING MOTIVES, RISK PERCEPTION AND DIFFERENT PSYCHOLOGICAL
VARIABLES**

Abstract

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Examining eating behaviour has a key role in health promotion due to the consequences of malnutrition, such as obesity. It is very important to explore the background of adolescents' eating behaviour to develop nutritional education for their later life. We examined the role of different factors such as eating motivation, risk perception and psychological variables (self-efficacy, self-control and optimism/pessimism) in adolescents' eating behavior. Our aim was to detect their relationships based on the Health Belief Model. We hypothesized that healthy and unhealthy eating behaviour relates to different eating motives, they are supported positively by self-efficacy, self-control and optimism, and risk perception impacts eating decisions.

We conducted three different research projects among adolescents (N = 814; 14-19 years; mean age = 16.18 years, S.D. = 1.33 years; 42.3% males) from different types of high schools in Hungary between the years of 2017-2019. Data were collected by means of self-administered/anonymous questionnaires. Besides descriptive statistics, correlations, linear regression, and a path analysis were applied to examine the relationships between the variables. Using multivariate analyses, we examined the factors of Health Belief Model on the likelihood of healthy eating.

Our main results showed that healthy eating motives (such as weight control and health) promoted healthy eating behaviors and sociability impeded them but only at correlational level. Self-efficacy, self-control and optimism was positively related to healthy and negatively to unhealthy eating behaviour. Risk perception had a negligible role in adolescents eating behavior.

All in all, eating motives and psychological factors have important roles and can be used in health promotion programs on healthy eating. In such programs, Health Belief Model seemed an appropriate theory in predicting adolescents' likelihood of healthy eating.