

Abstract:

Recent literature supports the role of interoception –the ability to detect and process visceral signals– in adaptive eating behaviors; however, researchers have yet to explore the individual relationships between adaptive eating behavior and the three facets of interoception: interoceptive accuracy (IAcc), interoceptive sensibility (IS), and interoceptive metacognitive awareness (IAw). The objective of this study was to determine the individual relationships between the three facets of interoception and adaptive eating behavior; we also explored a potential moderation of the relationship between metacognitive awareness and adaptive eating behavior by negative appraisals about one’s interoceptive signals. College students (n=81, 70.4% female, 26.5% male, and 3.06% non-binary) completed a heart rate discrimination task, self-report measures of interoceptive sensibility and their appraisals about their interoceptive signals and an eating in the absence of hunger (EiAH) behavioral paradigm. Regression analyses revealed a significant interaction between negative body appraisals and IAw in predicting EiAH, suggesting that when participants report significantly lower intensity of interoceptive signals, and lower negative interpretations of these signals, higher metacognitive awareness promotes less eating in the absence of hunger. In contrast, when participants report more intense and more distressing appraisals of interoceptive signals, higher metacognitive awareness promotes greater eating in the absence of hunger. Future research should not only expand on the nuanced roles of the facets of interoception on adaptive eating behaviors, but also investigate the development and behavioral implications of affective appraisals of interoception as it relates to adaptive eating behavior.