

## “Is Lack of Sleep a Weighty Issue?”

### A new study into stress and snacking points to lack of sleep and workplace tiredness as a new link to weight problems

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> June** – A major new study launching today into the relationship between stress and snacking has pin-pointed a clear relationship between **poor sleeping patterns and bad eating habits**. It has excited nutritional therapists who have realised the potential for **connecting weight management with better sleep**.

Poor sleep can trigger a vicious cycle of unhealthy snacking in the workplace. Tiredness, poor concentration and low productivity can lead to a **propensity to grab foods rich in sugars or energy** to compensate. When our bodies send us the signal that we're tired in a work setting where we're unable to sleep, we often think we can boost our flagging energy levels with sweet foods. But snacking on sugary items leads to a peak in blood sugar followed by a trough, which in turn can prompt people to seek out further high-energy snacks.

According to Nutritional Scientist, Miguel Toribio-Mateas who is a lecturer at the Institute for Optimum Nutrition, *“Sleep deprivation enhances neuronal activity in certain areas of the brain which can be a trigger for ‘craving’ mechanisms. Lack of sleep also seems to have an effect on glucose tolerance and insulin sensitivity which determines how well our body is able to metabolise energy from foods containing carbohydrates. This is significant, as impaired insulin sensitivity has been related to food cravings for more sugary foods.”*

The new study commissioned by global nutrition company Herbalife supports these findings. **Over 20% of office workers between the ages of 26 and 65 experienced high sleep latency** and took 31 minutes or longer to get to sleep. Those surveyed with high sleep latency consumed more unhealthy snacks – crisps, chocolate, chips and soft drinks - than those who got to sleep faster. They also ate fewer healthy snacks - fruit, dried fruit and nuts - than their low sleep latency colleagues creating a negative cycle where tiredness leads to ‘unhealthy’ snacking which in turn can disturb sleep because of high sugar content.

The survey of 5000 office workers between the ages of 18-75 in the UK, France, Germany, Spain and Italy examined snacking over the course of a typical office workers day. While 44% of people across Europe said they ate something outside of meal times, it was those in the **UK that snacked the most (55%)**. There were also substantial differences between what snackers and non-snackers consumed at lunch and dinner.

- At lunch, snackers ate more meat, pasta, rice, potatoes, bread and salad than their colleagues who didn't snack.
- Non-snackers ate more yoghurt, fish, soup, cereal, oats and porridge at lunch compared with their snacking colleagues.
- At dinner, snackers ate more bread, cereal, dessert and fish than non-snackers
- While non-snackers ate more meat, pasta, rice and potatoes, salad, soup and yoghurt for their evening meal.

The British are actually leading the way in terms of snacking, followed by Italy, Germany and Spain with the French snacking the least. Britons consume 1.57 unhealthy snacks a day as opposed to the French at 1.43. Top snacks for the British are fruit, cookies and crisps; the latter not featuring as a top three snack in any other country but the UK demonstrating just how unhealthy our own snacking is compared to Europe.

Across Europe;

- **Women tend to snack more than men** and this is true across the categories of fruit, chocolate, cookies, yoghurt and dried fruit and nuts.
- However, **men snack more than women on crisps and chips** while snacking on soft drinks is virtually equal across genders.

As well as a greater propensity to snack, unsurprisingly **women in the study took longer to get to sleep than men.**

Comments Miguel Toribio-Mateas, *“Short term sleep deprivation seems to affect more women than men, increasing energy intake and leading to more weight gain in women than men. Compared to men, women tend to behave more emotionally in relation to food. This has been scientifically proven through tomographic imaging where researchers have found differences in how women and men react to food choices. Additionally, women also seem to suffer as a result of juggling multiple demands. This can result in elevated cortisol levels which in turn can lead to a reduction in sleep quality and quantity”.*

### **How to stop the sugar-fuelled energy rollercoaster**

Breakfast really is the most important meal of the day – particularly if you wake up tired. It’s not just a cliché – a good breakfast sends a reassuring message to the brain, making you feel fuller for longer and minimising your chances of snacking on unhealthy foods throughout the day. That’s because a breakfast containing good quality protein or other low glycaemic index foods should minimise hunger by keeping blood sugar levels stable until lunchtime.

Unfortunately, **the study shows that UK breakfast and lunchtime meals consist of a high ratio of carbohydrates**, particularly simple sugars, compared to protein and fat. This imbalance could explain why British office workers snack significantly more than their continental counterparts. Eating such highly refined carbs in the first half of the working day sends a signal to the brain that energy for the rest of the day will also burn off quickly. The result is a **cycle of craving similar types of sugary foods** to keep energy levels up in a roller coaster of peaking and plummeting blood sugar levels.

Adds Miguel Toribio-Mateas, *“Breakfast for weary office workers should contain a source of good quality protein. Recent studies have shown that having meat or eggs is one of the best ways of not feeling that mid-morning slump in energy which tends to be accompanied by the need to snack. For those people who don’t have time to prepare a cooked breakfast, protein shakes are a viable way to introduce good quality protein early in the day. Soy in particular has been found to both speed up the body’s ability to burn calories, balance blood sugar as well as providing a healthy snack which makes you feel fuller for longer.”*

## Top Tips to Combat Tiredness-Induced Weight Gain

Those who are overtired in the evening or indeed throughout the day put themselves at greater risk of craving unhealthy snacks leading to a greater propensity to overeat.

- Eat a protein-rich breakfast; meat is ideal or bacon and eggs without the fried bread.
- If a cooked breakfast is unrealistic, protein or meal replacement shakes are a great way of introducing good quality protein early in the day.
- A timed meal pattern of 3 main meals a day reduces the need for food based rewards.

For more details on the study, or to download a full copy of the findings, please go to [www.xxxxxx](http://www.xxxxxx)

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### Notes to Editors:

The Stress and Snacking Study points to other notable insights:

- Britons are experiencing the highest levels of workplace stress in Europe; the study significantly links occupational stress with sleep latency (time it takes to get to sleep) and gender.
- Job stress is highest amongst 26-35 year olds who are also consuming the highest quantities of unhealthy snacks.
- Women are more job stressed than men , consumed more unhealthy snacks and took longer to get to sleep.
- Working more overtime hours is linked to stress. The more stressed workers are, the more overtime is worked, the less likely workers are to exercise and to consider themselves healthy.

Operating in the UK for 27 years Herbalife Ltd. (NYSE:HLF) is a global network marketing company that sells weight-management, nutrition, and personal care products intended to support a healthy lifestyle. Herbalife products are sold in over 80 countries through a network of approximately two million independent distributors. The company supports the Herbalife Family Foundation and its Casa Herbalife program to help bring good nutrition to children. Herbalife's Web site contains a significant amount of information about Herbalife, including financial and other information for investors at <http://ir.herbalife.com>. The company encourages investors to visit its Web site from time to time, as information is updated and new information is posted.