Eating disorders :

Neurobiology of anorexia and bulimia nervosa

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INTRODUCTION

Eating disorders are disabling and usually chronic conditions characterized by aberrant patterns of feeding and weight regulation.
They have a complex etiology involving social and biological factors, and parallel with severe neuroendocrine dysfunctions.
Brain reward systems are suggested to play a major role in the development and/or maintenance of eating disorders.

OBJECTIVES

Do we understand the physiological dysregulation that lies beneath symptomatology?
→ Improvement of therapeutic approaches and outcomes.

REGULATION OF FEEDING

Food consumption can be caused by:

- Energy imbalance
- A cognitive decision ←→ reward

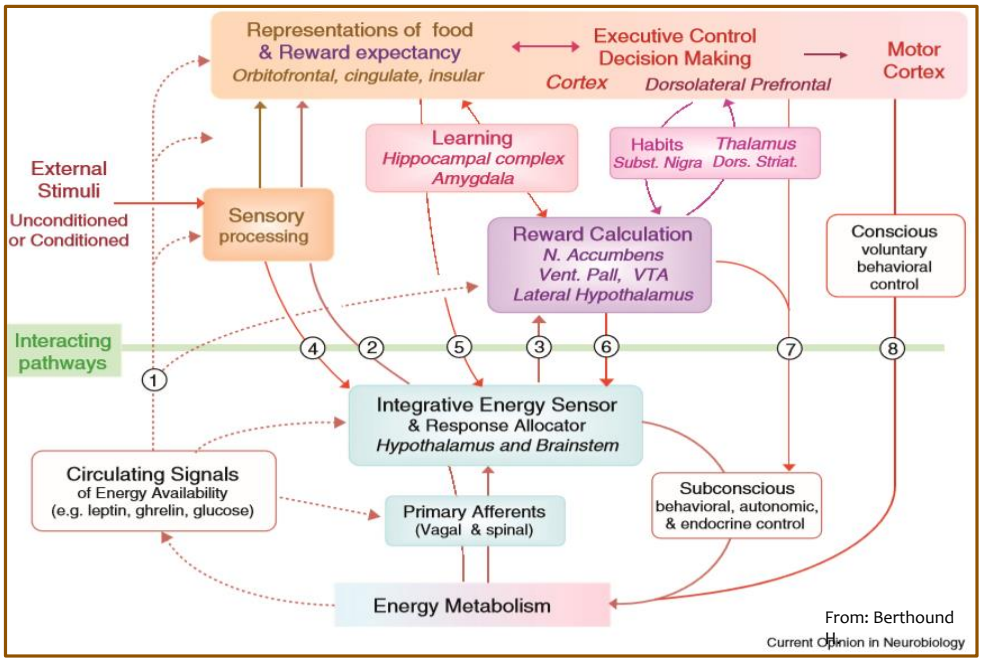
Eating disorders and reward

Anorexia Nervosa (AN): ascetic traits, ability to delay reward
Bulimia Nervosa (BN): novelty – seeking & reward – seeking behaviors

Dopamine signaling in eating disorders:

BN, obesity and substance abuse might share dopamine D2 receptor vulnerabilities (lower D2 – R availability / function)

INTEGRATION OF FOOD AND FOOD – RELATED STIMULI:



CONCLUSIONS

Eating disorders have yet to be completely understood. That said, reward and self – control might be as important as the energy balance component.

MAIN REFERENCES

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