

A Review of Methods to Assess Parental Feeding Practices and Preschool Children's Eating Behavior: The Need for Further Development of Tools.

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ABSTRACT

We reviewed tools developed to measure parental feeding practices and eating behaviour and food intake or preferences of children aged 0 to 5 years. Two electronic literature databases (Medline and Psycinfo) were used to search for both observational and experimental studies in human beings. The articles selected for review were those presenting tools with data on internal consistency and/or test–retest reliability and/or construct validity. A total of 3,445 articles were retrieved, and further searching of reference lists and contact with experts produced an additional 18 articles. We identified three tools on the qualitative dimension of children's eating behavior, two tools on food intake or preferences, and one tool on parental feeding practices with rigorous testing of internal consistency, construct validity, and test–retest reliability. All other tools presented in this review need further evaluation of their validity or reliability. Because major gaps exist, we highlight the need for more tools on parental attention to children's hunger and satiety cues, and the need to evaluate the degree of control allowed to children younger than age 2 years in feeding events. Food avoidance (ie, behaviors or strategies to take away and to reject food) and food approach (ie, attractiveness for food stimuli) have not been assessed in children aged 12 to 24 months. Food preference tests based on sensory aspects rather than nutritional quality may be worth investigating. We identified a need for further evaluation of quality, especially test–retest reliability and construct validity, for most tools developed for use in studying children aged 0 to 5 years.

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