

# Study links 'food addiction' to obesity

30 September 2013

University of Queensland researchers have found most Australians and Americans believe food is addictive and comparable to drug addiction.

The researchers used an online survey to assess public attitudes toward obesity and gauge opinions on the causes and risk factors of obesity.

UQ's School of Population Health Masters graduate Natalia Lee said despite significant support to treat obesity as a form of addiction, participants saw eating and weight as an individual's responsibility.

"While participants believed food addiction to be a cause of obesity, this did not change their attitudes towards obese people or the most effective way of treating obesity," Mrs Lee said.

"This finding alone has important implications for the treatment of obesity and policy responses alike."

Dr Adrian Carter, Research Fellow from UQ's Centre for Clinical Research, said the public supported the view that some foods could be addictive, but this did not translate into support for medical treatments of obesity.

"Public health policies which experts believe will most likely reduce rates of obesity, such as regulation of food advertising and increased taxes, were also not supported by most participants," Dr Carter said.

"Participants viewed obesity as a condition that individuals had to overcome through personal choice and willpower."

Scientists hope that recognition of obesity as a form of food addiction may improve obesity treatment and foster greater public acceptance of health policies.

Results of this study show a need for further investigation to explain the inconsistency between support for food addiction and a strong emphasis on weight being a personal choice.

Read the full publication: *Public Views on Food Addiction and Obesity: Implications for Policy and Treatment*, published in [PLOS ONE](#).

Media: Kate Sullivan, UQ Centre for Clinical Research 07 3346 5555, 0421 819 807 or [k.sullivan4@uq.edu.au](mailto:k.sullivan4@uq.edu.au).

**Share link:**


<http://tinyurl.com/mntueln>



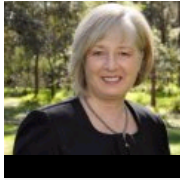
**Subscribe to the UQ News weekly newsletter**



**HEALTH + MEDICINE**



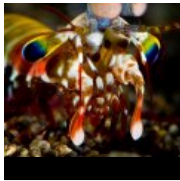
**Domestic violence linked to pet loyalty**  
25 September 2014



TRI welcomes new  
CEO 23 September  
2014

UQ experts for National Stroke Week,  
8 – 14 September 8 September 2014

**ENGINEERING + TECHNOLOGY,  
HEALTH + MEDICINE, RESEARCH**



Nature' s elegant  
and efficient vision  
systems can detect  
cancer 22  
September 2014

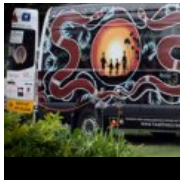
**ENGINEERING + TECHNOLOGY,  
HEALTH + MEDICINE**



Nanopatch to help  
WHO battle polio  
17 September 2014

UQ-Global Medical Solutions  
agreement to enhance patient  
diagnosis 11 September 2014

**HEALTH + MEDICINE,  
INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA**

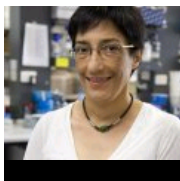


New telehealth  
centre a boon for  
rural and remote  
Queenslanders 10  
September 2014

**HEALTH + MEDICINE, AWARDS  
AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

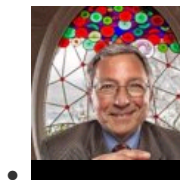


UQ students win  
HealthFusion Team  
Challenge 8  
September 2014

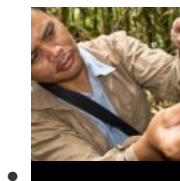


Arthritis treatment  
up for people' s  
choice award 4  
September 2014

**RECENT HEADLINES**



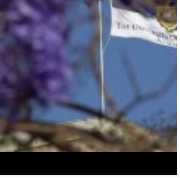
Domestic  
violence linked  
to pet loyalty 25  
September 2014



Future miners  
could harvest  
metal from plants  
25 September  
2014



Sewer technology brings global honour for UQ-led team <sup>25</sup>  
September 2014



UQ plans new student housing complex <sup>25</sup>  
September 2014

[More headlines](#)

[Soap: a sexy night on the tiles at the Brisbane Festival](#)

15 September 2014

[Grand slam: Lally Katz's Doll's House at the Brisbane Festival](#)

16 September 2014

[Laser helps find supermassive black hole in a small galaxy](#)

18 September 2014

[Dingo control doesn't hurt native wildlife: largest Australian study](#)

18 September 2014

[Birthing on Country could deliver healthier babies and communities](#)

20 September 2014

[Read more](#) UQ articles on The Conversation

[Home](#) › [Study links 'food addiction' to obesity](#)

Brisbane St Lucia, QLD 4072

+61 7 3365 1111

Other Campuses: [UQ Ipswich](#), [UQ Gatton](#), [UQ Herston](#)

[Maps and Directions](#)

© 2014 The University of Queensland

A MEMBER OF



 GROUP OF EIGHT

[Privacy & Terms of use](#) | [Feedback](#)

Authorised by: Director, Office of Marketing and Communications  
ABN: 63 942 912 684  
CRICOS Provider No: 00025B

QUICK LINKS

-  [For Media](#)
-  [Emergency Contact](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA

NEED HELP?

EMERGENCY

[3365 3333](#)

EXPLORE

-  [Giving to UQ](#)
-  [Faculties & Divisions](#)
-  [UQ Jobs](#)
-  [UQ Contacts](#)
-  [Services & Facilities](#)
-  [Login](#)