

Naets, T., Vervoort, L. & Braet, C. (September 2019). Exploring the effectiveness of a self-control training on top of inpatient treatment, for improving weight loss and eating behavior in obese youngsters. Presented at the 25th Annual Meeting of the Eating Disorders Research Society EDRS, Chicago, United States of America **Abstract:**

PURPOSE: Long-term effects of childhood multidisciplinary obesity treatment (MOT) can still be improved by tackling underlying mechanisms for sustainable weight control. Evidence stresses the role of dual self-control processes, stating that individuals with obesity have strong bottom-up reactivity towards unhealthy food (attention bias), that cannot be properly regulated because of weak top-down executive functioning (i.e. inhibitory control). Substantial proof of concept underlines the importance of training this attention and inhibition towards better self-control.

METHOD: This RCT, conducted in both an inpatient and two outpatient treatment settings, supplemented existing MOT with an online self-control training. Effects on various parameters were compared in an experimental versus an active control group of youngsters with obesity (originally n=187, 63% girls, 8-18y), at both post-treatment and 6-month follow-up.

RESULTS: Follow-up data are still being collected, but pre-post changes were already explored. In comparison to the active control group, better progress is expected in the experimental condition on weight, eating behavior, internalizing symptoms, and self-esteem. Preliminary pre-post analysis show changes in both self-control abilities and maladaptive eating behavior.

CONCLUSION: It is stated that this self-control training is important in facilitating long-term effectivity of childhood obesity treatment.