**The Mindful Eating Behavior Scale: Development and psychometric properties in a sample of Dutch adults aged 55 years and older**

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**Lay summary**

Mindfulness that is related to eating behavior can be termed mindful eating. Mindful eating is eating with attention and awareness. Earlier scales on mindful eating did not measure mindful eating independent from emotional or external eating or mindful eating in common situations. Therefore, we aimed to develop a new scale to measure mindful eating: the Mindful Eating Behavior Scale (MEBS).

Participants were 1,227 Dutch adults aged 55 years and older from the Longitudinal Aging Study Amsterdam. An initial version of the MEBS was designed based on a selection of 20 items from existing instruments. The internal structure of the MEBS was evaluated using an exploratory structural equation modeling approach on half of the sample and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the whole sample. The measurement invariance of the scores was tested with respect to sex, age and BMI. Reliabilities of subscales were determined with Cronbach’s alpha. To test convergent validity, the scores of the MEBS were correlated with theoretically relevant variables.

Two items of the MEBS were deleted because of low item loadings and one item because of high correlated uniqueness. The final CFA model with 17 items and four domains (Focused Eating, Hunger and Satiety Cues, Eating with Awareness and Eating without Distraction) showed good fit (CFI = .97, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .04). Measurement invariance was found for sex, age, and BMI. Cronbach’s alpha’s were medium to high (.70 to .89). Most correlations were in the expected directions.

In conclusion, the MEBS was successfully developed consisting of 17 items and four domains. Because of low inter-factor correlations, a total score combining the four domains should not be computed. The MEBS showed good internal consistency and preliminary convergent validity in a sample of Dutch adults of 55 years and older. The development of the MEBS is an important first step in better understanding how eating with attention and awareness regarding food can contribute to eating behaviours, weight, but also mental well-being and other health issues.