To examine the correlation between self-regulation of food intake, interoception, and eating behaviors in college students living in South Florida.

**INTRODUCTION**

College years are known to be pivotal in adapting to unhealthy eating behaviors. The lack of the ability to recognize physiological needs and insufficient self-regulation in food intake have been reported to be significant determinants in college weight gain. However, the relationship between self-regulation, understanding internal bodily signals, and students eating behaviors are not clear.

**PARTICIPANTS**

- **Interoception (internal bodily signals):**
  - Body Awareness Questionnaire (BAQ)
  - Body Responsiveness Scale (BRS)
- **Eating behaviors:**
  - Three-Factor Eating Questionnaire-R18 (TFEQ-R18)
  - Dutch Eating Behavior Questionnaire (DEBQ)
- **Self-regulation:**
  - Students’ Compensation Indices (COMPX). In this study, the absolute value of COMPX was used. Closer score to “0” indicates better self-regulation of food intake.
- **Anthropometrics:**
  - Stadiometer for height
  - InBody machine for weight and BMI

**PROCEDURE**

Students had 2 visits, one week apart, where they were asked to fill out the questionnaires, offered with a preload drink (either low or high calorie) followed by an *ad-libitum* buffet lunch after 30 minutes to measure the effect of the preloads on students’ food intake. Intake was estimated using pictures of students’ plates before and after eating and it was verified by plate weights.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

Multiple linear regression analyses were performed to determine the correlations between interoception, eating behaviors, and COMPX.

**RESULTS**

When controlled for gender, it was found that interoception was negatively correlated with COMPX (F=5.56, p=.002, R²=0.247), emotional eating (F=3.89, p=.013, R²=0.182), and uncontrolled eating (F=3.95, p=.012, R²=0.163).

Additionally, COMPX was positively associated with cognitive restraint eating (F=8.67, p=.001, R²=0.250).

When controlled for BMI, interoception only had a significant negative correlation with emotional eating (F=3.10, p=.033, R²=0.131), uncontrolled eating (F=3.06, p=.035, R²=0.131), and restraint eating (F=5.35, p=.002, R²=0.206). There was no correlation between COMPX, eating behaviors, and interoception (p>.05). No significant mediation effect was observed.

**CONCLUSION**

College students who showed higher levels of awareness of internal bodily signals seem to have better self-regulation of food intake. Moreover, self-regulation appears to be negatively affected by the students’ emotions and restraint where students show better regulation in food intake when there is less emotional influence and eating restrictions.