OP7: THE ROLE OF CRAVING FOR ABNORMAL EATING AND ADDICTION IN OBESE CHILDREN
E Ardelt-Gattinger\textsuperscript{1,2}, A van Egmond-Fröhlich\textsuperscript{1,4}, M Meindl\textsuperscript{1}, S Ring-Dimitriou\textsuperscript{1,2}, D Weghuber\textsuperscript{1,3}
\textsuperscript{1}Department of Psychology, University of Salzburg, Obesity Academy Austria; \textsuperscript{2}University Salzburg, Austria; \\
\textsuperscript{3}Private Medical School Salzburg, Austria; \textsuperscript{4}Rehab Facility Schönau, Berchtesgaden

Objectives. There is controversy about the role of craving and addiction in obesity (Ellis et al 1992, Pudel & Westenhöfer 1998). In adults we have shown that BMI groups differ significantly in craving/addiction with respect to food and that craving/addiction is a strong predictor of weight loss after surgical and behavioral interventions (Ardelt-Gattinger et al., 2000). Here we attempt to replicate this in children.

Method: In a cross sectional study (CS) we surveyed 4428 10-16-year old pupils from a representative selection of Austrian schools. We included 66 (Out1) and 79 (Out2) 10-14 year olds in interdisciplinary obesity group training of 2 year duration. Finally we observed 53 obese participants (age 10-14) of a three week weight-loss camp (CAMP). We used the child version of the food related craving/addiction questionnaire (FUN-KJ, Aedelt-Gattinger & Moorehead, 2009) and measured weight and height (longitudinally pre/post).

Results. The craving/addiction score (CAS) differed significantly $F_{(8/4428)} = 41.85, p<0.01; \eta^2 = 0.07$ between BMI-groups in the CS. Patients with declining sdsBMI had significantly ($F_{(1.66)} = 6.52, p<0.05$ Out1) and trend ($2.36, p<0.10$ Out2) lower baseline CAS and post treatment CAS ($F_{(1.79)} = 3.53, p<0.01$ Out2). For the patients in CAMP CAS was the strongest predictor of weight loss (Beta=0.503, $t=-2.25, p=0.036$).

Conclusion: These results prove the relevance of food craving/addiction in childhood obesity.

Key words: Obesity, Craving, Addiction, Children, Predictors