UCSF to lead 'Hungry for Change: Food Insecurity, Stress and Obesity'

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UC San Francisco experts on hunger, obesity and nutrition will present the eleventh annual sugar, stress, environment and weight (SSEW) symposium on Wednesday, Oct. 25 at UCLA Ackerman Ballroom, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (PT).

"Hungry for Change: Food Insecurity, Stress and Obesity" is headed by the UCSF Center for Obesity Assessment, Study and Treatment (COAST) and the UCLA School of Law Resnick Program for Food Policy and Law. It will unite researchers, health care providers and policy advocates from six UC campuses in a daylong conference focusing on food insecurity, stress, obesity and social equity.
Registration is free to the public [4]. The event will be livestreamed on Twitter: @SSEWSScience [5].

?This year, our annual obesity symposium takes a new turn,? said Elissa Epel, PhD [6], UCSF professor of psychiatry and director of COAST and the SSEW Initiative. ?Our speakers are not just researchers. We are reaching into the community to bridge research, policy and activism. We now have a deep understanding of the common causes of the obesity and hunger epidemics, and the failures of weight loss attempts. Action is necessary, and the public must be informed.? Speakers and panelists will describe the pervasive and invisible impact of psychological stress, sugar and food insecurity on obesity. ?The conference will encourage attendees and online viewers to consider changes they can make in their lives and communities, fueled by novel findings shared by diverse experts,? said Epel.

Highlights include:

- In opening remarks, Neal Baer, MD, of UCLA, founder of actionlab.org, urges scientists, public health advocates and policy makers to address sugared drinks and related public health challenges.
- Kelly Brownell, PhD, of Duke University, offers a new map for strategic research and global reduction in obesity.
- Cindy Leung, ScD, MPH, UCSF and University of Michigan, provides a novel close up on the stress and stigma of hunger.
- David Ludwig, MD, PhD, Harvard University and Boston Children's Hospital, reveals why traditional diets create hunger and ultimately fail, and discusses the role of sugars.
- Hilary Seligman, MD, associate professor of medicine, and epidemiology and biostatistics, discusses the real cost of food insecurity on body and mind, and the most effective solutions.
- Laura Schmidt, PhD, UCSF professor of health policy and SSEW Initiative co-director, moderates a panel discussion on the effects of food insecurity on low-income UC students.
- Robert Lustig, MD, UCSF professor emeritus of pediatrics, Division of Endocrinology, moderates ?The Hacking of the American Tastebud: Industry vs. Public Health,? a panel discussion on the sugar industry?s role in changing the American diet, the public health implications and backlash. The session will be livestreamed on Facebook from 3:00 to 3:30 p.m.

"Hungry For Change" is led by Epel, Schmidt and Samantha Schilf, executive director of the SSEW Initiative.

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**About UCSF Psychiatry**

The [UCSF Department of Psychiatry](#) and the Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute are among the nation's foremost resources in the fields of child, adolescent, adult, and geriatric mental health. Together they constitute one of the largest departments in the UCSF School of Medicine and the UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences, with a mission focused on research (basic, translational, clinical), teaching, patient care, and public service.
UCSF Psychiatry conducts its clinical, educational and research efforts at a variety of locations in Northern California, including UCSF campuses at Parnassus Heights, Mission Bay and Laurel Heights, UCSF Medical Center, UCSF Benioff Children's Hospitals, Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center, the San Francisco VA Health Care System, and UCSF Fresno.

About the UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences

The UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences [8], established by the extraordinary generosity of Joan and Sanford I. "Sandy" Weill, brings together world-class researchers with top-ranked physicians to solve some of the most complex challenges in the human brain.

The UCSF Weill Institute leverages UCSF?s unrivaled bench-to-bedside excellence in the neurosciences. It unites three UCSF departments?Neurology, Psychiatry, and Neurological Surgery?that are highly esteemed for both patient care and research, as well as the Neuroscience Graduate Program, a cross-disciplinary alliance of nearly 100 UCSF faculty members from 15 basic-science departments, as well as the UCSF Institute for Neurodegenerative Diseases, a multidisciplinary research center focused on finding effective treatments for Alzheimer's disease, frontotemporal dementia, Parkinson's disease, and other neurodegenerative disorders.

About UCSF

UC San Francisco (UCSF) [9] is a leading university dedicated to promoting health worldwide through advanced biomedical research, graduate-level education in the life sciences and health professions, and excellence in patient care. It includes top-ranked graduate schools of dentistry, medicine, nursing and pharmacy; a graduate division with nationally renowned programs in basic, biomedical, translational and population sciences; and a preeminent biomedical research enterprise. It also includes UCSF Health, which comprises top-ranked hospitals ? UCSF Medical Center [10] and UCSF Benioff Children?s Hospitals in San Francisco [11] and Oakland [12] ? and other partner and affiliated hospitals and healthcare providers throughout the Bay Area.


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[1] https://www.ucsf.edu/content/leigh-suzanne
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