EXERCISE 6.3: BRAIN MECHANISMS AND MOTIVATION

INSTRUCTOR’S NOTES

- TOPICS RELATING TO THIS EXERCISE
  Methods of investigating the brain, biological approach, eating disorders.

- STRUCTURE
  This will probably work best as an individual exercise for the physiological factors, using the text. The psychological factors can then be tackled through group discussion.

- PURPOSE
  To consolidate the idea that physiological explanations are insufficient, and to organise information for revision purposes.

- USING THE EXERCISE
  Documenting the physiological aspects of eating should be straightforward enough, although some prompting may be required.

  The psychological aspects to consider include obesity, anorexia, and bulimia (emphasising the extent to which they may be considered physiological or psychological), need for variety, effect of time of day, and other cues such as positive incentives, and social pressure.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Are there any benefits to be gained from the psychological factors that influence eating behaviours (e.g., evolutionary significance of social cooperation, preference for variety)?

- Are there any disadvantages (e.g., anorexia/media influences)?
Animals are biologically motivated to seek food or liquid in order to return their body to a steady state, so hunger and thirst are attributable to physiological factors. However, these behaviours may also be influenced by psychological factors. In the table below, list as many examples as you can for eating, providing research evidence where possible. Try to consider both the “start” and “stop” mechanisms separately.

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<th>Physiological factors</th>
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