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**Title**

The effect of covertly reducing food portion size at a single meal on daily energy intake and appetite control in overweight and obese adults.

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1 **What is already known about this subject:**

- 2 • Larger portion sizes are linked with increased energy intake.
- 3 • There is an innate asymmetry to the appetite control system.
- 4 • There is a notable paucity of evidence on specifically reducing portion size in an
- 5 overweight and obese population.

6 **What this study adds:**

- 7 • This study for the first time examines the effects of covert portion size reduction on
- 8 later daily energy intake and appetite control in overweight and obese adults.
- 9 • This study argues that covert portion size reduction could be a useful approach in
- 10 attempts to constrain energy intake, particularly for weight gain prevention.

11 **Abstract**

12 **Background:** Larger portion sizes (PS) are associated with greater energy intake (EI), but

13 little evidence exists on appetitive effects of PS reduction.

14 **Objective:** To investigate covertly reducing breakfast PS on subsequent EI, postprandial

15 gastrointestinal hormone and perceived appetite responses.

16 **Design:** A randomized crossover study in 33 adults (mean BMI 29kg/m<sup>2</sup>). Condition A

17 provided breakfast (25% of gender-specific estimated daily energy requirements); PS was

18 then reduced by 20% (condition B) and 40% (condition C). EI was measured at an *ad libitum*

19 lunch (240mins) and snack (360mins), and by weighed diet diaries (rest of the day). Blood

20 was sampled after breakfast from 20 participants. Perceived appetite was measured using

21 visual analogue scales.

22 **Results:** Postprandial profiles of PYY, GLP-1, GIP, insulin and fullness were lower and  
23 hunger, desire to eat and prospective consumption higher in condition C compared to A.  
24 Despite this, EI at lunch (A:2930±203; B:2853±198; C:2911±179kJ) and later that day  
25 (A:3865±332; B:4011±369; C:3798±357kJ) did not differ. Hormones were not consistently  
26 associated with subsequent EI, but perceived appetite profiles were.

27 **Conclusions:** Covert PS reduction does not lead to subsequent energy compensation that day,  
28 suggesting it could constrain daily EI. Further research is required given altered perceived  
29 appetite and gastrointestinal hormones responses.

## 30 **Introduction**

31 Concurrent with increasing prevalence of obesity has been increased mass of food consumed  
32 per eating occasion (1-3) and the size of commercially available portions (4-6). Empirical  
33 evidence shows larger portion sizes (PS) lead to greater energy intake (EI) at a single meal; an  
34 effect that continues with 11 days of manipulation (7-15). Reducing PS is a central  
35 component in weight management advice, but experimental work to investigate whether PS  
36 reduction leads to reduced EI is limited (7-15). Given the asymmetry of appetite and  
37 homeostatic mechanisms to achieve energy balance (16), energy compensation may occur in  
38 an environment where food is widely available. Understanding the response of short-term  
39 appetite control mechanisms to a PS reduction is important to understand the likely impact on  
40 EI.

41 This study investigated whether covertly reducing the PS of a meal is an effective strategy to  
42 reduce day-long EI in overweight and obese adults and the impact on gastrointestinal  
43 hormones and perceived appetite as measures of biological and psychological appetite control  
44 mechanisms.

## 45 **Methods**

### 46 *Study Design*

47 This was a randomised crossover design involving three PS conditions, presented to each  
48 participant at a standardised breakfast time on separate days: a control PS (condition A); PS  
49 reduced by 20% (condition B); and PS reduced by 40% (condition C). The control provided  
50 25% of estimated daily energy requirements for the intended average study participant  
51 according to gender (24), (3310kJ for men and 2540kJ for women). Participants were blinded  
52 to the specific aims of the study and foods prepared to make the intervention as covert as

53 possible. For each individual, study visits were conducted >1 week apart, on the same day of  
54 the week and outside of the luteal phase of the menstrual cycle for females.

### 55 *Participants*

56 Healthy, 18-60y men and women, with a BMI  $\geq 25$  and  $< 35 \text{ kg/m}^2$  were recruited. Participants  
57 were excluded for disordered eating assessed with Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26) score  $\geq 11$   
58 (17-19), depressive symptoms using the Zung Depression Scale score  $\geq 70$  (20), smoking,  
59 excessive habitual alcohol intake ( $> 14$  units/week for women,  $> 21$  units/week for men),  
60 weight loss/gain within the last three months ( $> 4.5 \text{ kg}$ ) or actively trying to lose/gain weight,  
61 medical conditions or medications potentially affecting appetite, inflammatory conditions,  
62 diabetes or fasting plasma glucose  $\geq 7 \text{ mmol/l}$ , pregnancy, breastfeeding or planning a  
63 pregnancy, extremely high levels of exercise (moderate or vigorous level for more than  
64 420min/week assessed with International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) (21)),  
65 unable to eat test foods, and not regularly consuming breakfast (breakfast  $\leq 3$ /week).

66 A sample size of 33 was recruited to give 83% power to detect a minimum difference of  
67 500kJ EI at lunch between any pair of experimental conditions assuming an SD of 950kJ  
68 (8,10,22). Biochemical measures were conducted in a sub-group of 20 participants.

### 69 *Recruitment and screening*

70 Participants were recruited from the community, for a study investigating the “relationship  
71 between diet and metabolism”. Height, weight, waist circumference, body composition  
72 (Tanita body composition analyser BC-418MA), and resting metabolic rate (RMR; IS Gem  
73 204 with GEMNutrition 2008.4 software) were measured. Participants completed the EAT-  
74 26, Zung depression scale, IPAQ and the Three Factor Eating Questionnaire (TFEQ)  
75 measuring the traits dietary restraint, disinhibition, and hunger (23) and fasting plasma

76 glucose assessed. Participants were asked to maintain their usual exercise and dietary habits  
77 during the study.

### 78 *Study visits*

79 Participants fasted overnight (11h prior to each visit) and were asked to refrain from alcohol  
80 and avoid strenuous exercise for the 24h before each study day. Provision of the test breakfast  
81 marked time zero. Subsequent EI was measured by pre- and post-meal weighing of an *ad*  
82 *libitum* lunch (240min) and afternoon snack (360min), plus a weighed diet diary to record the  
83 remainder of the day's intake. Visual analogue scale (VAS) questionnaires rating palatability  
84 and meal size were given during breakfast and lunch. Perceived appetite ratings were  
85 measured using VAS questionnaires at 30min intervals until lunch, then immediately after  
86 and at 300 and 360min, then hourly. In a subgroup of 20 participants, blood samples were  
87 collected at fasting and 30, 60, 120, 180 and 240min for the analysis of peptide tyrosine  
88 tyrosine 3-36 (PYY<sub>3-36</sub>), total glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1), total glucose-dependent  
89 insulinotropic peptide (GIP), glucose and insulin (**Figure 1**).

90 At the end of the study participants were fully debriefed on the study aims, reimbursed for  
91 travel expenses and given an honorarium. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from  
92 Cambridgeshire 2 Research Ethics Committee in November 2010 (Ref: 10/H0308/99) and  
93 participants gave informed written consent. The study was conducted at Medical Research  
94 Council Human Nutrition Research (MRC HNR) between January 2011 and September 2012.

### 95 *Study foods*

96 The study breakfast and lunch provided the average reported macronutrient composition of  
97 the UK diet (35% energy from fat, 18% from protein and 47% from carbohydrates (25)). The  
98 breakfast consisted of a wheat-based breakfast cereal with semi-skimmed milk, scrambled

99 egg, ham, brown toast and butter, and orange juice. The *ad libitum* lunch consisted of a single  
100 course amorphous meal of pasta, mince, tomato sauce, mixed vegetables and grated cheese.  
101 The lunch provided 1978kJ (men) or 1518kJ (women). The *ad libitum* snack consisted of ten  
102 digestive biscuits on a plate.

103 The completed diet diaries and recorded consumption at lunch and snack for each study day  
104 were coded by the Dietary Assessment Team at HNR using the in-house dietary assessment  
105 system. Dietary data was then extracted from the system for analysis.

#### 106 *Questionnaires*

107 The mood and appetite VAS questionnaires rated hunger, fullness, desire to eat and  
108 prospective consumption, and also included five distractor questions. The palatability  
109 questionnaire used VAS to rate the pleasantness of the food appearance, aroma, taste and  
110 texture, desire to eat the food, and the size of the portion. The VAS questionnaires asked  
111 participants to mark a horizontal line measuring 100mm with the ends labelled with the  
112 extremes of each sensation (e.g. “Not at all” and “Extremely”). The distance from the left end  
113 to where the participant mark was drawn was measured to the nearest millimetre.

#### 114 *Analytic methods*

115 Blood samples were separated on collection and plasma stored at -80°C until analysis.  
116 Plasma samples collected on EDTA and treated with dipeptidyl peptidase-IV (DPP-IV)  
117 inhibitor immediately on collection (10µl DPP-IV inhibitor/ml of blood) were analysed for  
118 PYY<sub>3-36</sub> by radioimmunoassay (Millipore®, Massachusetts, USA) (interassay CVs: 15% at  
119 84pg/ml and 7% at 217pg/ml), at University College Hospital, London; total GLP-1 using an  
120 electrochemical luminescence immunoassay kit on the MesoScale Discovery® multi-array  
121 assay platform (Maryland, USA) (CVs: 16.4% at 5.4pg/ml, 11.9% at 29pg/ml and 11.6% at



122 83pg/ml), at Core Biochemical Assay Laboratory (CBAL), Cambridge; and total GIP using an  
123 enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (Millipore<sup>®</sup>, Massachusetts, USA) (CVs: 6.1% at  
124 26pg/ml, 3.3% at 50pg/ml, 2.3% at 134pg/ml and 1.8% at 166pg/ml), at Cambridge Institute  
125 for Medical Research. Plasma samples collected on fluoride oxalate were analysed for  
126 glucose using a Dimension<sup>®</sup> clinical chemistry system (Siemens, Newark, USA) (CVs: 1.69%  
127 at 6.23mmol/L, 2.23% at 3.09mmol/L and 2.56% at 18.88mmol/L), at MRC HNR. Plasma  
128 collected on lithium heparin were analysed for insulin on a 1235 AutoDELFIA<sup>®</sup> automatic  
129 immunoassay analyzer using a two-step time resolved fluorometric assay (Perkin Elmer Life  
130 Sciences, Wallac Oy, Turku, Finland) (CVs: 3.1% at 29pmol/L, 2.1% at 79.4pmol/L, 1.9% at  
131 277pmol/L and 2.0% at 705pmol/L) at CBAL, Cambridge.

### 132 *Statistical analysis*

133 Mixed effects models for continuous responses (26) were used for analysis, which extend  
134 standard linear regression to account for within-person variation through random effects. EI  
135 and perceived PS at breakfast were modelled with PS condition as the explanatory variable,  
136 controlling for gender and BMI. Dietary restraint, disinhibition and hunger, were tested for  
137 inclusion as covariates, but were omitted for no effects on the associations of interest.

138 The effect of PS condition on biochemical measures and perceived appetite ratings was  
139 assessed by the interaction between condition and time, which estimated differences at each  
140 time point. Area under the curve (AUC) was calculated using the trapezoidal rule for the time  
141 periods of fasting to the pre-lunch time-point for biochemical measures and perceived appetite  
142 ratings, and over the whole day for perceived appetite ratings. Models of whole-day  
143 perceived appetite AUC included PS condition as the explanatory variable, controlling for  
144 time over which appetite ratings were made.

145 Models predicting EI at lunch included explanatory variables of either the pre-lunch or AUC  
146 for each biochemical measure or perceived appetite rating, and controlled for condition,  
147 gender and BMI. Similar models assessed the relationship between the whole-day AUC of  
148 perceived appetite rating with whole day EI (except breakfast), also controlling for time over  
149 which appetite ratings were made.

150 To examine the relationship between biochemical measures and perceived appetite, perceived  
151 appetite ratings were modelled separately with each biochemical measure as the explanatory  
152 variable. Time, a quadratic term for time, condition, gender and BMI were included as  
153 covariates.

154 Potential carry-over and sequence effects, gender, BMI and age, unless specified above as  
155 included *a priori*, were omitted as covariates as there were no effects on the associations of  
156 interest. To account for correlation induced by multiple observations/individual (three visits),  
157 a random intercept was incorporated into the models. The models for biochemical and  
158 perceived appetite profiles as outcomes had two levels of clustering due to repeated sampling  
159 time-points and the crossover design. Therefore, a random intercept and a random slope for  
160 time were added to model within-individual variation. Models were fitted using maximum  
161 likelihood estimation and likelihood ratio tests were used for model comparison. Plots of  
162 residuals were used to check the goodness of fit for each outcome. Insulin and GIP data were  
163 transformed (natural logarithm and square root respectively) for analyses, for a symmetrical  
164 distribution. All analyses used STATA®12.0 software (StataCorp, Texas, USA). Statistical  
165 significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ . Data are presented as mean  $\pm$  SEM unless indicated otherwise.

## 166 **Results**

### 167 *Participant characteristics*

168 The characteristics of the study participants are shown in **Table 1**.

169 *Energy intake (EI)*

170 EI was not different between conditions at lunch (**Figure 2A**; A vs. B,  $\beta=-76.6$ ,  $p=0.429$ ; B  
171 vs. C,  $\beta=58.2$ ,  $p=0.547$ ; A vs. C,  $\beta=-18.3$ ,  $p=0.850$ ), or the remainder of the day (**Figure 2B**;  
172 A vs. B,  $\beta=192.3$ ,  $p=0.555$ ; B vs. C,  $\beta=-152.8$ ,  $p=0.639$ ; A vs. C,  $\beta=39.5$ ,  $p=0.904$ ). Daily EI  
173 was  $10287 \pm 395$ kJ,  $9897 \pm 491$ kJ and  $9161 \pm 437$ kJ in conditions A, B and C respectively.

174 *Biochemical measures*

175 **Figure 3** shows the postprandial profiles for each of the gastrointestinal hormones.  
176 Compared to condition A, there was a reduction in PYY in C at 120min ( $\beta=-22.05$ ,  $p=0.022$ ),  
177 and 240min ( $\beta=-23.9$ ,  $p=0.013$ ). There was no condition-time interaction for conditions C  
178 compared to B ( $p>0.076$ ), or B compared to A ( $p>0.42$ ). Compared to condition A, GLP-1  
179 was lower in C at 30 ( $\beta=-4.4$ ,  $p=0.024$ ), 60 ( $\beta=-4.2$ ,  $p=0.032$ ), 120 ( $\beta=-5.1$ ,  $p=0.009$ ), 180  
180 ( $\beta=-7.8$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), and 240min ( $\beta=-6.1$ ,  $p=0.002$ ). GLP-1 was also lower in condition C  
181 compared to B at 180min ( $\beta=-4.1$ ,  $p=0.038$ ). There was no condition-time interaction for  
182 condition B compared to A ( $p>0.056$ ). GIP was lower in condition B compared to A at 120  
183 ( $\beta=-1.6$ ,  $p=0.014$ ), 180 ( $\beta=-2.3$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and 240min ( $\beta=-2.5$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). GIP was lower in  
184 condition C compared to A at 30 ( $\beta=-2.2$ ,  $p=0.001$ ), 60 ( $\beta=-2.4$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), 120 ( $\beta=-4.2$ ,  
185  $p<0.001$ ), 180 ( $\beta=-5.5$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and 240min ( $\beta=-4.6$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), and compared to B at 30 ( $\beta=-$   
186  $1.3$ ,  $p=0.046$ ), 120 ( $\beta=-2.6$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), 180 ( $\beta=-3.2$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and 240min ( $\beta=-2.0$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

187 Glucose and insulin profiles are shown in **Figure 4**. There was no condition-time interaction  
188 for glucose for condition B compared to A ( $p>0.224$ ), condition C compared to A ( $p>0.655$ )  
189 or condition C compared to B ( $p>0.210$ ). There was a condition-time interaction such that  
190 insulin was less in condition C compared to A at 120 ( $\beta=-0.7$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), 180 ( $\beta=-0.7$ ,

191  $p < 0.001$ ), and 240min ( $\beta = -0.4$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ), and insulin was also less in condition C compared  
192 to B at 120 ( $\beta = -0.5$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), and 180min ( $\beta = -0.4$ ,  $p = 0.014$ ). There was no condition-time  
193 interaction for condition B compared to A ( $p > 0.083$ ).

#### 194 *Perceived appetite ratings*

195 **Figure 5** shows the perceived appetite ratings. Compared to condition A, hunger was greater  
196 in C at all time-points from 30-240min ( $p < 0.006$ ). Hunger was also greater in condition C at  
197 all time-points postprandially ( $p < 0.021$ ) when compared to B. There was no condition-time  
198 interaction for condition B compared to A ( $p > 0.291$ ). Compared to condition A, fullness was  
199 lower in C at all time-points from 20-180min ( $p < 0.019$ ). Fullness was lower in condition C at  
200 30 ( $p = 0.017$ ) and 90min ( $p = 0.003$ ) when compared to B. Also fullness was lower in  
201 condition B compared to A at 60 ( $p = 0.041$ ) and 120min ( $p = 0.040$ ). Desire to eat ratings were  
202 greater in condition C at all time-points postprandially ( $p < 0.023$ ) compared to A, and at all  
203 time-points from 20-210min ( $p < 0.037$ ) compared to B. There was no condition-time  
204 interaction for condition B compared to A ( $p > 0.223$ ). Prospective consumption was greater in  
205 condition C compared to A at all time-points postprandially ( $p < 0.011$ ) and compared to B, at  
206 120 ( $p = 0.018$ ) and 150min ( $p = 0.027$ ). There was no condition-time interaction for condition  
207 B compared to A ( $p > 0.068$ ).

208 AUCs over the whole day for hunger, desire to eat and prospective consumption were greater  
209 in condition C compared to A, and smaller for fullness (hunger  $\beta = 2423.9$ ,  $p = 0.025$ ; fullness  
210  $\beta = -4857.9$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ; desire to eat  $\beta = 3832.5$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ; prospective consumption  $\beta = 3427.9$ ,  
211  $p = 0.001$ ). AUC for prospective consumption ratings was greater in condition B compared to  
212 A ( $\beta = 2284.1$ ,  $p = 0.025$ ), but AUC for hunger ( $p = 0.232$ ), fullness ( $p = 0.136$ ), and desire to eat  
213 ( $p = 0.118$ ) did not differ. There were no differences in hunger or fullness when comparing  
214 conditions B and C (data not shown).

215 *Predictors of energy intake (EI) at lunch and over the whole day*

216 Most of the biochemical measures did not predict EI at lunch ( $p>0.137$ ) (**Table 2**). However,  
217 AUC ( $p=0.032$ ) and pre-lunch ( $p=0.049$ ) measures of PYY were positively associated with EI  
218 at lunch. AUCs and pre-lunch measures of hunger, desire to eat and prospective consumption  
219 were positively associated with lunch EI ( $p<0.02$ ). Pre-lunch fullness was negatively  
220 associated with lunch EI ( $p<0.002$ ), but fullness AUC was not ( $p=0.085$ ). AUCs for hunger,  
221 desire to eat and prospective consumption, but not fullness ( $p=0.469$ ), were positively  
222 associated with EI over the day ( $p<0.026$ ).

223 *Associations between biochemical measures and perceived appetite ratings*

224 GLP-1, GIP, glucose and insulin were negatively associated with hunger, desire to eat, and  
225 prospective consumption, and positively associated with fullness ( $p<0.012$ ). PYY was not  
226 associated with any of the perceived appetite ratings ( $p>0.068$ ) (**Table 3**).

227 *Perceived portion size (PS)*

228 At debriefing, none of the participants were concerned about the study's covert nature and  
229 consented to data inclusion. Only two participants noticed the change in PS at breakfast.  
230 However the ratings of perceived meal size at breakfast were different between conditions.  
231 Perceived breakfast size was smaller in condition C compared to both A ( $\beta=-15.6$ ,  $p<0.001$ )  
232 and B ( $\beta=-10.8$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), and perceived meal size smaller in B compared to A (data not  
233 shown).

234 **Discussion**

235 Reducing PS at a single meal alters psychological and biological markers of appetite, but  
236 there is no energy compensation later in the day. EIs at lunch were strikingly consistent in

237 this standardized laboratory setting. These findings indicate covertly reducing PS of a  
238 prepared meal could lead to a net reduction in daily EI. However, the effect on perceived  
239 appetite and gastrointestinal hormones, particularly after the 40% reduction in PS questions  
240 the sustainability of this strategy to constrain EI.

241 There were very few differences in the profiles for PYY and GLP-1 between the standard PS  
242 and the 20% reduction. Moreover, there were few differences in the profiles when comparing  
243 the 20% and 40% reduction conditions suggesting that the responses in these biochemical  
244 measures may not be sensitive to the smaller change in PS (660kJ men and 510kJ women).  
245 Indeed, all previous studies where a reduction in energy load has led to attenuated PYY  
246 (27,28), GLP-1 (29,30), or insulin (31,32) profiles, used energy changes between 920-2096kJ.  
247 However, the present study showed distinct differences between all conditions in the  
248 postprandial profiles for GIP showing that it is sensitive to energy changes in a clear dose  
249 response manner, reflecting its important role as an incretin hormone for the regulation of  
250 insulin secretion.

251 Interestingly, the ratings of perceived PS of the breakfast were different between conditions,  
252 although at debriefing most participants reported not noticing the meal manipulation. The  
253 effect size for the difference between perceived PS ratings was considerably smaller when  
254 comparing conditions A *versus* B than B *versus* C ( $\beta=-4.8$ ;  $\beta=-10.8$ ), although the absolute  
255 difference in energy was the same. This difference is likely due to either the relative  
256 difference between PS being different (20% A-B, and 25% B-C), or due to the Weber-  
257 Fechner law, whereby the ability to perceive stimulus change is proportional to the logarithm  
258 of the magnitude of the stimulus (33). Thus, as the reference portion size in the first  
259 comparison (A *versus* B) was larger than the second (B *versus* C), the change in PS detectable  
260 for the first pairing would have been larger than the second. It is possible that the perception

261 of how much energy is provided, and thus consumed, could affect appetite ratings. The  
262 smaller effect size of perceived PS between conditions A and B could in part account for  
263 fewer differences in perceived appetite ratings between these conditions.

264 Postprandial biochemical responses were poor predictors of subsequent EI, consistent with  
265 much of the existing evidence (34-36). However, perceived appetite ratings tended to predict  
266 EI at lunch and the rest of the day. This is in agreement with some (22, 37-39), but not all  
267 (40,41), previous studies. The mixed evidence likely reflects the subjective nature of the  
268 perception of appetite which leads to measurement variability, but differences are more easily  
269 detected in crossover than parallel design studies (42). Although associations between  
270 perceived appetite and EI in the present study were highly significant, the effect sizes were  
271 small. This, coupled with relatively small differences in postprandial perceived appetite  
272 response to the manipulated meal, could in part explain the lack of compensation for the  
273 changes in energy. In contrast with the known function of PYY, where exogenous  
274 administration reduces EI (27, 43, 44), there was a small but significant positive effect of  
275 AUC and pre-lunch PYY on subsequent EI. However, the effect decreased after adjustment  
276 for additional participant characteristics, indicating it may be confounded by other factors.  
277 Thus there is uncertainty about these present findings relating PYY. In contrast to the clear  
278 exogenous effect, endogenous postprandial responses in PYY were not associated with  
279 subsequent EI (22,35,45), possibly as exogenous PYY tends to be supra-physiological (22).

280 GLP-1, glucose and insulin were positively related to fullness and negatively related to  
281 hunger, desire to eat and prospective consumption consistent with previous research  
282 (32,34,46-49), indicating that these biochemical measures are likely to play roles in the  
283 perception of appetite sensations. However, some studies have found no relationship, or  
284 mixed results, between glucose or insulin and perceived appetite ratings (34,39), possibly

285 because they have reported correlations between the mean AUC or peak values rather than  
286 examining within-person relationships. Previous findings with respect to the relationship  
287 between postprandial PYY and perceived appetite are mixed, including positive associations  
288 between PYY and perceived fullness (46,50), while others, consistent with the present  
289 findings, have found no associations (22,49,51), or associations in lean but not obese  
290 participants (45). Thus, the robustness of the association of endogenous PYY with perceived  
291 appetite is questionable. It is unclear whether GIP plays a role in influencing appetite and EI  
292 (52), however the present findings showed GIP was associated with perceived appetite  
293 ratings. The distinct similarity between GIP and perceived appetite profiles may have led to  
294 these associations, but causality cannot be assumed. The lack of association between GIP and  
295 subsequent lunch EI is in agreement with the perspective that GIP does not influence EI.

296 The present findings support the concept that covertly reducing the PS of commercially  
297 available unit foods or pre-prepared meals could constrain EI and contribute to prevention of  
298 weight gain. However as weight control advice is inherently overt, it is important to establish  
299 whether similar effects are seen when participants are aware of the reduction in PS.

300 There are several limitations to this study. It was conducted in a laboratory setting and,  
301 although the specific hypothesis was concealed, participants were aware of their eating  
302 behaviour being observed. The frequency and type of food provided at lunch was fixed, thus  
303 only the amount could vary potentially limiting compensation by removing some of the  
304 environmental cues that are profuse in a free-living environment and can influence EI. This  
305 setting also prevented any self-initiated eating episodes between breakfast and lunch. Some  
306 of the appetite and hormone profiles suggest effects of PS reduction may have diminished  
307 over time and compensation might be seen in a free-living environment during this period.  
308 The study was conducted over a single day and it is possible that a longer period of



309 consuming PSs set to provide energy below requirements could lead to adaptation and energy  
310 compensation. Future studies should attempt to examine PS reduction in a more realistic  
311 setting and with prolonged exposure to smaller portions.

### 312 *Conclusions*

313 Covert reductions in PS lead to lower EI, despite changes in biological and behavioural  
314 measures that tend to favour energy compensation. Although the effect size is small, if  
315 sustained this will be of public health benefit, in the prevention of weight gain.

### 316 **Conflict of interest**

317 SAJ is the independent Chair of the Department of Health Responsibility Deal Food Network  
318 in England, which includes voluntary agreements with industry to reduce the portion size of  
319 some food and drinks. No other authors declare a conflict of interest.

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322 protocol. IS-T advised on statistical analysis. HBL conducted research, analysed data,  
323 interpreted results, and drafted the manuscript. ALA, IS-T, CGW, FR, FMG and SAJ  
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**Table 1:** Participant characteristics.

Mean  $\pm$  SEM.

BMI: Body Mass Index. RMR: Resting metabolic rate.

**Table 2:** Estimated regression coefficients to measure associations between biochemical measures and perceived appetite ratings (predictor variables) with energy intake at lunch and over the whole day apart from breakfast (outcome variables), from mixed effects models.

AUC: area under the curve. EI: energy intake. SE: standard error.

Area under the curve was calculated for between the fasting and pre-lunch time points for predicting energy intake at lunch. Area under the curve for the whole day was calculated for predicting energy intake over the whole day apart from breakfast. Each predictor was analysed in a separate mixed effects model.

Values are given to 4 significant figures. Those in bold are significant.

**Table 3:** Estimated regression coefficients to measure associations between biochemical measures (predictor variables) and perceived appetite ratings (outcome variables) from baseline to the pre-lunch time-point, from mixed effects models.

SE: standard error.

Each predictor was analysed in a separate model.

Values are given to 4 significant figures. Those in bold are significant.

**Figure 1:** Overview of the time points for meals and measurements taken during a study day (GIP: glucose-dependent insulintropic peptide; GLP-1: glucagon-like peptide 1; MRC HNR: Medical Research Council Human Nutrition Research; PYY: peptide tyrosine tyrosine; VAS: visual analogue scales).

**Figure 2:** Mean ( $\pm$  SEM) energy intake at A) lunch and B) over the whole day, not including breakfast, according to condition.

**Figure 3:** Postprandial response (mean  $\pm$  SEM) of A) plasma PYY<sub>3-36</sub>, B) plasma total GLP-1, and C) plasma total GIP, according to condition. Letter indicates the condition where the mean is significantly different at that time point (mixed effects models):  $p < 0.05$ .

**Figure 4:** Postprandial response of A) plasma glucose (mean  $\pm$  SEM), and B) plasma insulin (geometric mean  $\pm$  95% confidence intervals), according to condition. Letter indicates the condition where the mean is significantly different at that time point (mixed effects models):  $p < 0.05$ .

**Figure 5:** Postprandial ratings (mean  $\pm$  SEM) for A) perceived hunger, B) perceived fullness, C) perceived desire to eat, and D) perceived prospective consumption, according to condition. Letter indicates the condition where the mean is significantly different at that time point (mixed effects models):  $p < 0.05$ .

Table 1

Participant characteristic	All participants (n=33)	Blood sample subgroup (n=20)	Non-blood subgroup (n=13)
Number of men/women	15/18	9/11	7/6
Height (m)	1.69 ± 0.01	1.69 ± 0.01	1.71 ± 0.03
Weight (kg)	83.8 ± 1.5	82.9 ± 2.1	85.3 ± 2.0
BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )	29.0 ± 0.4	29.0 ± 0.5	29.2 ± 0.8
Age (years)	42.5 ± 2.0	40.8 ± 2.5	45 ± 3.4
Dietary restraint	7.2 ± 0.7	6.5 ± 0.9	8.2 ± 1.1
Disinhibition	6.7 ± 0.6	6.5 ± 0.7	6.9 ± 1.1
Hunger trait	6.3 ± 0.7	6.2 ± 0.8	6.5 ± 1.1
RMR (kJ/day)	6594 ± 160	6704 ± 224	6425 ± 220
Fasting glucose (mmol/L)	4.8 ± 0.1	4.7 ± 0.1	4.9 ± 0.1
Body fat (%)	32.8 ± 1.5	31.9 ± 1.8	34.2 ± 2.6
Vigorous physical activity (mins per week)	65 ± 13	55 ± 14	80 ± 24
Moderate physical activity (mins per week)	142 ± 21	173 ± 29	94 ± 26
Walking (mins per week)	254 ± 30	270 ± 37	231 ± 53

Table 2

Predictor of lunch EI	AUC as predictor		Pre-lunch measure as predictor	
	Regression coefficient (SE)	p-value	Regression coefficient (SE)	p-value
<b>Biochemical measure</b>				
PYY	<b>0.029 (0.014)</b>	<b>0.032</b>	<b>4.442 (2.257)</b>	<b>0.049</b>
GLP-1	0.019 (0.071)	0.790	15.95 (11.17)	0.154
GIP	2.666 (4.446)	0.549	39.08 (33.06)	0.237
Glucose	-0.916 (0.710)	0.197	-365.5 (245.8)	0.137
Insulin	-197.0 (259.8)	0.448	-157.0 (168.7)	0.352
<b>Perceived appetite rating</b>				
Hunger	<b>0.091 (0.022)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>11.96 (3.934)</b>	<b>0.002</b>
Fullness	-0.029 (0.017)	0.085	<b>-10.43 (3.389)</b>	<b>0.002</b>
Desire to eat	<b>0.087 (0.018)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>8.788 (3.783)</b>	<b>0.020</b>
Prospective consumption	<b>0.100 (0.022)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>19.21 (4.384)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
<b>Predictor of whole day EI</b>				
	Regression coefficient (SE)	p-value		
<b>AUC perceived appetite rating</b>				
Hunger	<b>0.057 (0.025)</b>	<b>0.026</b>		
Fullness	-0.016 (0.021)	0.469		
Desire to eat	<b>0.057 (0.023)</b>	<b>0.013</b>		
Prospective consumption	<b>0.068 (0.025)</b>	<b>0.007</b>		

Table 3

Biochemical measure	Perceived appetite rating							
	Hunger		Fullness		Desire to eat		Prospective consumption	
	Regression coefficient (SE)	p-value	Regression coefficient (SE)	p-value	Regression coefficient (SE)	p-value	Regression coefficient (SE)	p-value
PYY	-0.032 (0.038)	0.409	0.041 (0.041)	0.315	-0.018 (0.040)	0.650	-0.028 (0.031)	0.366
GLP-1	<b>-0.494 (0.172)</b>	<b>0.004</b>	<b>0.631 (0.186)</b>	<b>0.001</b>	<b>-0.442 (0.176)</b>	<b>0.012</b>	<b>-0.421 (0.138)</b>	<b>0.002</b>
GIP	<b>-3.271 (0.373)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>3.357 (0.416)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>-3.143 (0.379)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>-2.629 (0.305)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Glucose	<b>-6.650 (1.058)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>6.058 (1.186)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>-5.493 (1.087)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>-4.396 (0.884)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Insulin	<b>-14.07 (1.227)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>14.33 (1.391)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>-13.63 (1.250)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	<b>-11.86 (0.990)</b>	<b>&lt;0.001</b>

Figure 1

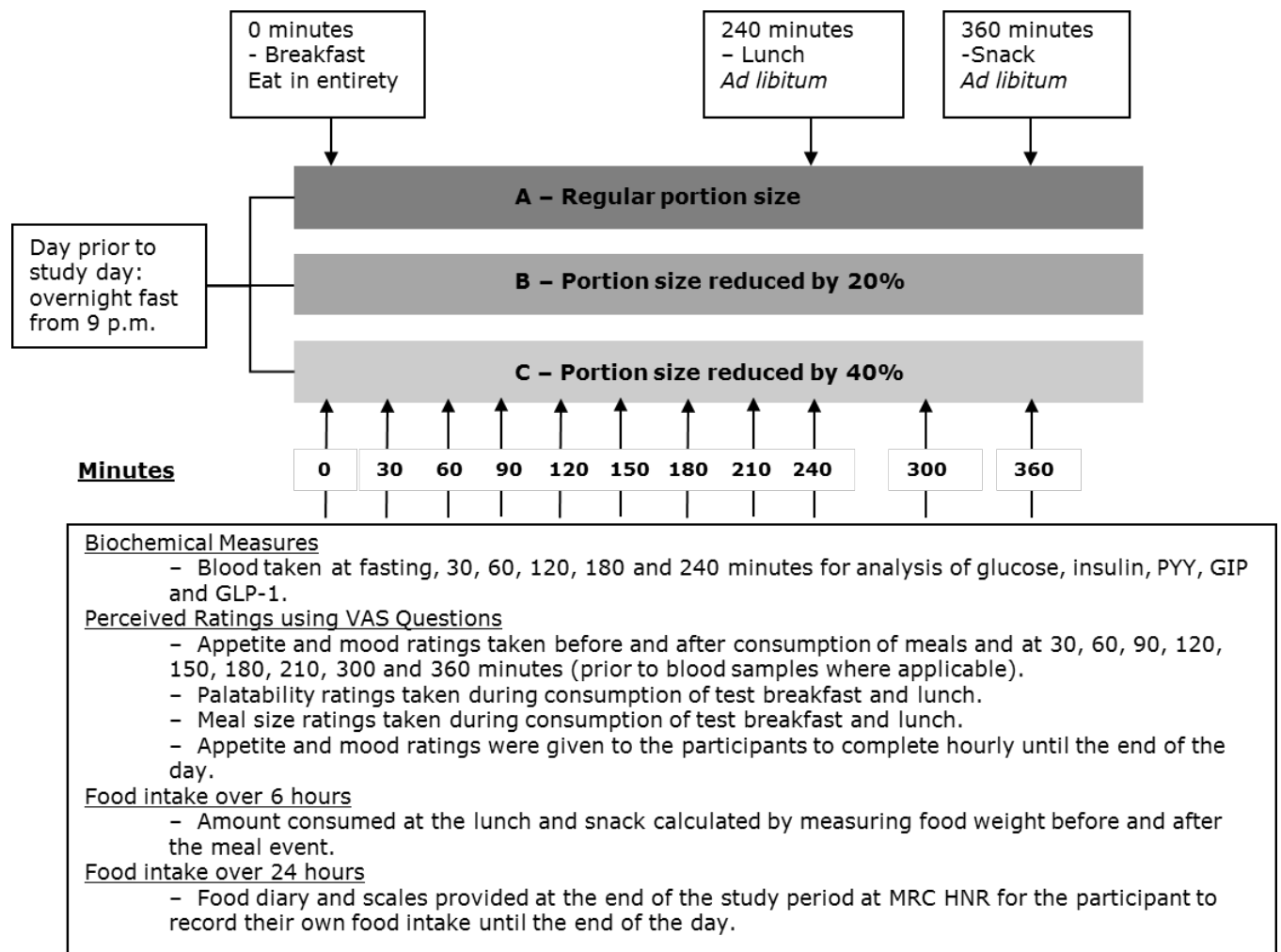
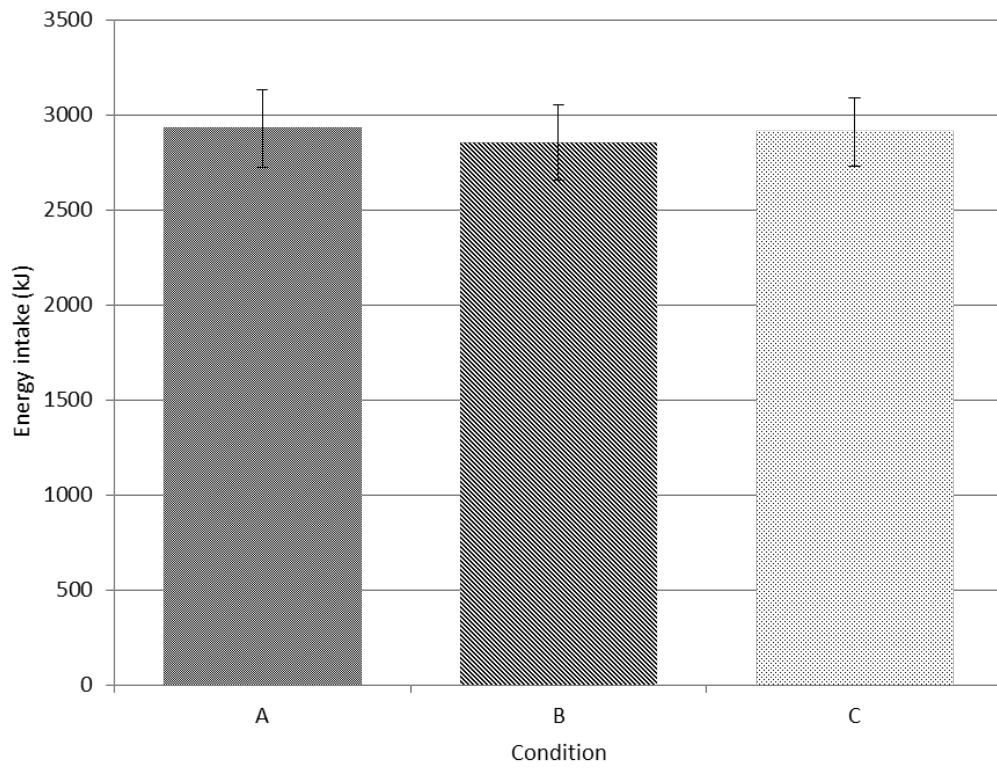


Figure 2

A)



B)

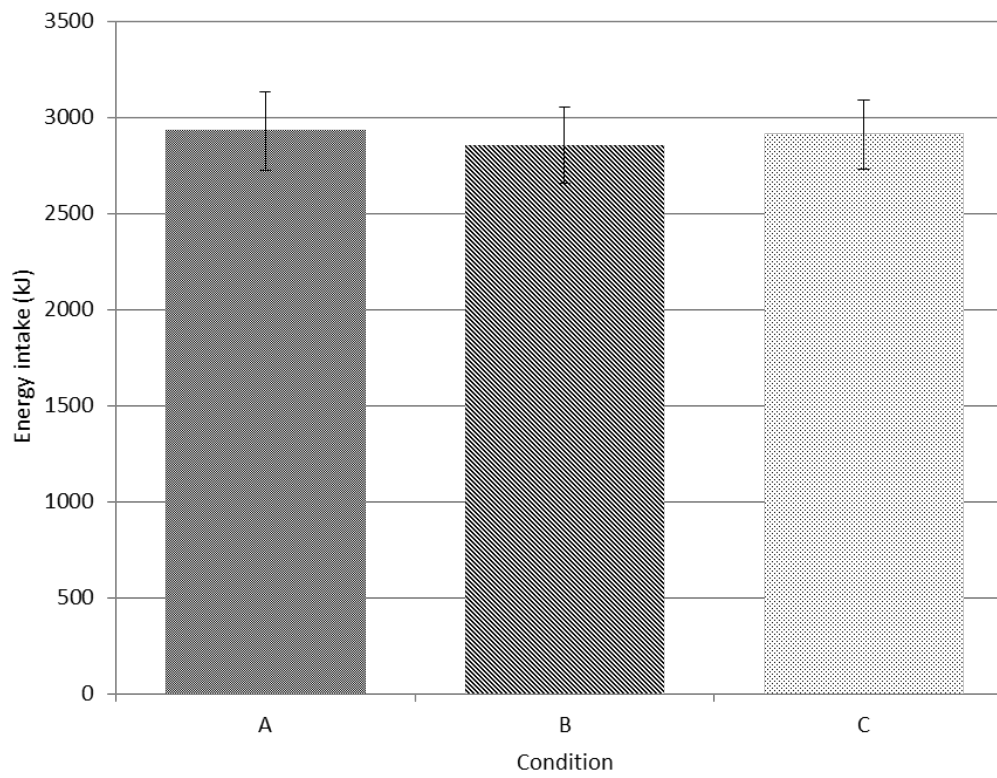
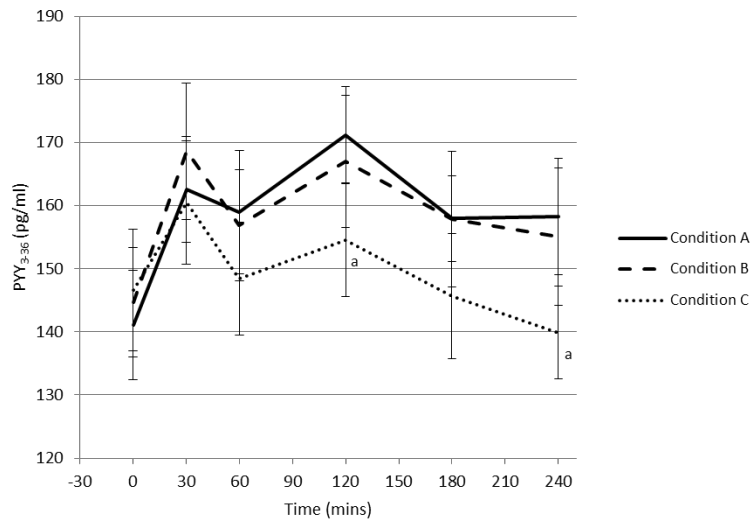


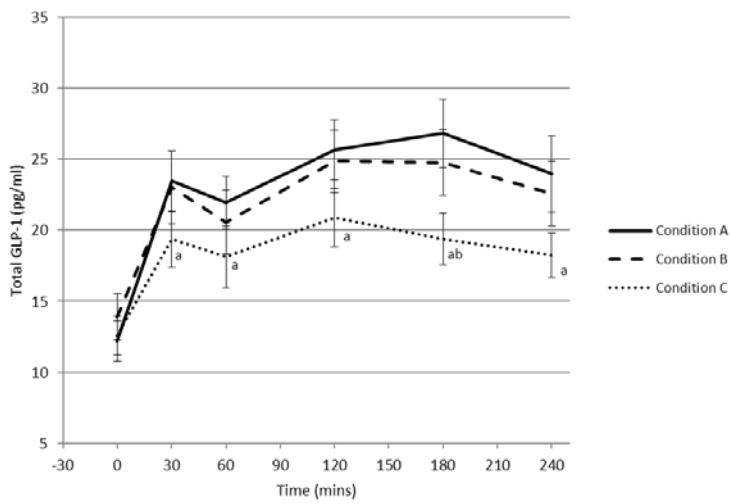


Figure 3

A)



B)



C)

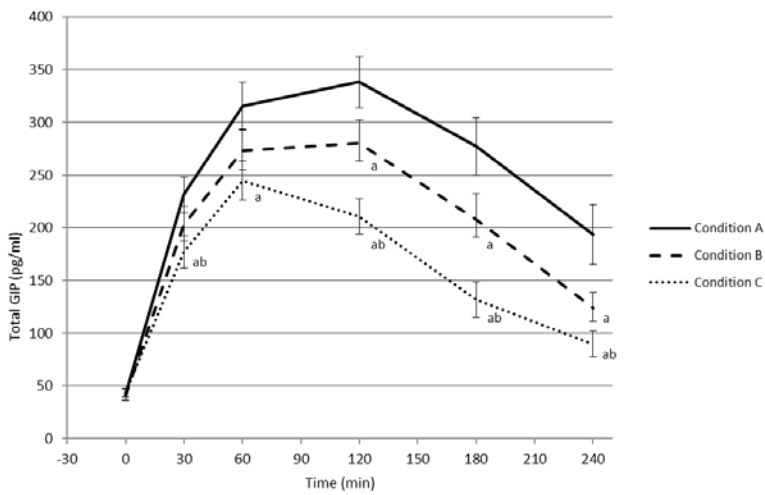
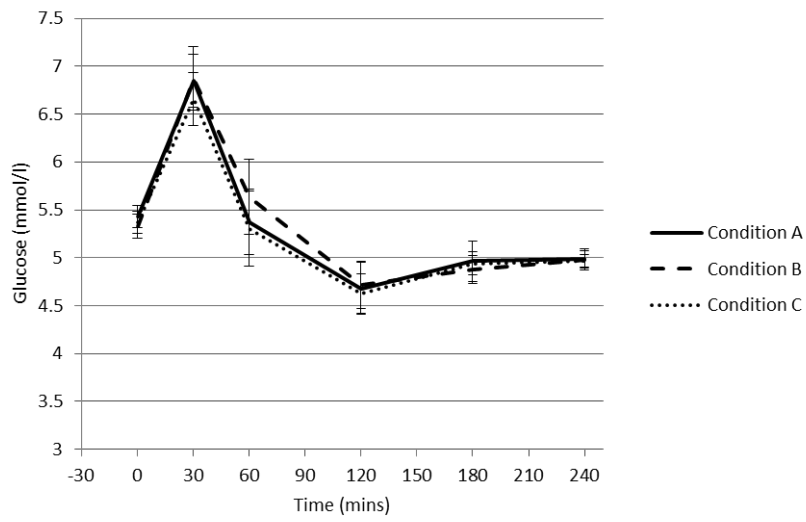


Figure 4

A)



B)

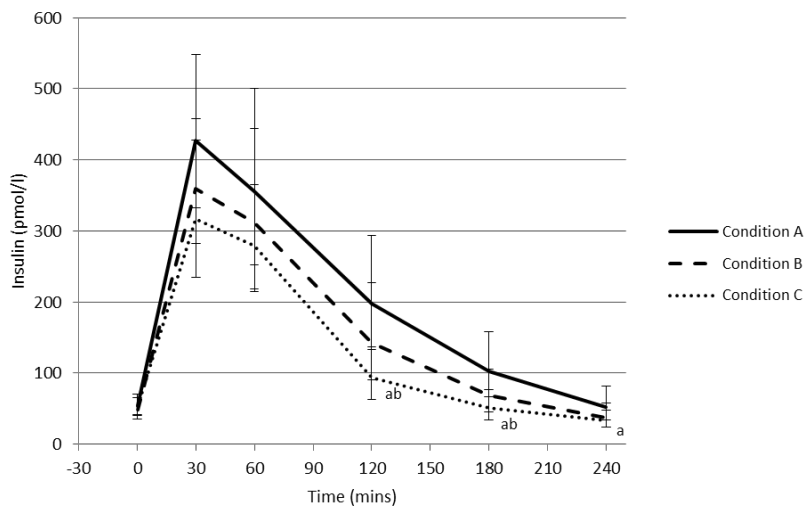
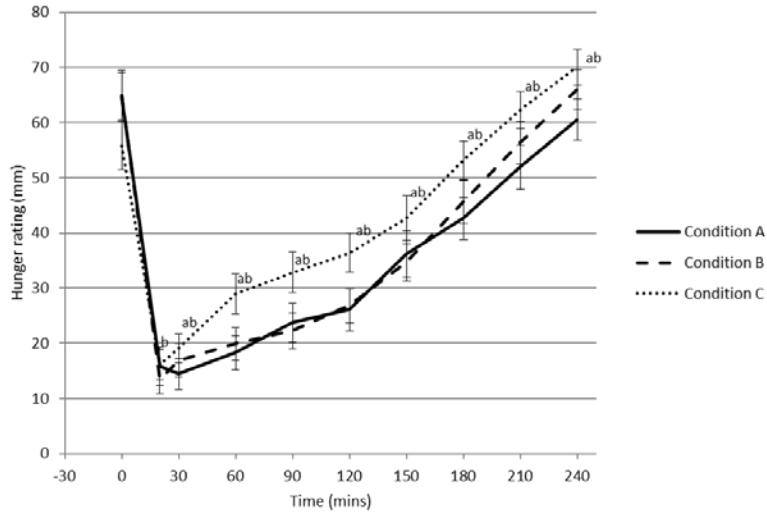
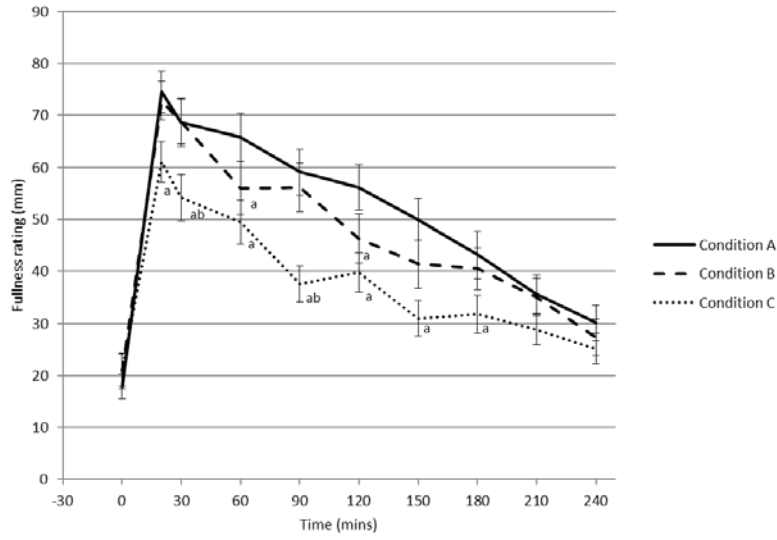


Figure 5

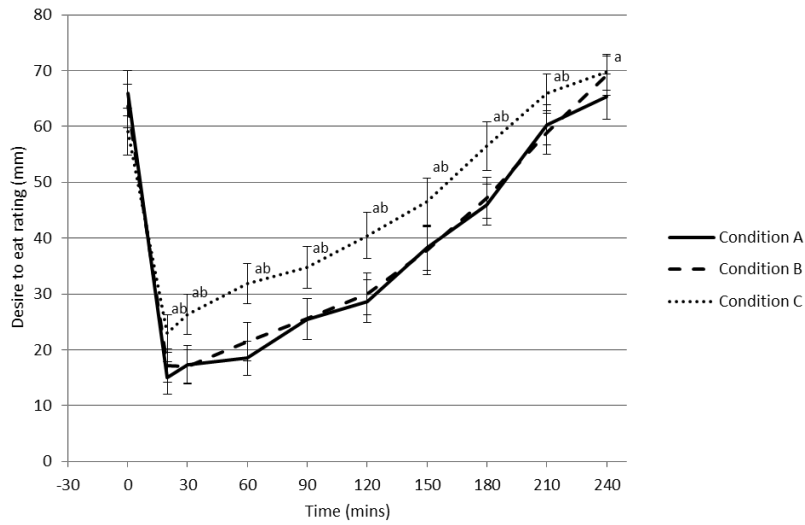
A)



B)



C)



D)

