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### **Moodfood summary**

Depression and obesity are among the leading global public health concerns, and literature shows that depression and obesity are related. Depression and obesity are also both associated with distorted body image. Distorted body image includes at least two components: perceptual body size (an estimation of one's body size, which can be distorted when different from actual body size) and body image dissatisfaction (affective concerns with one's body size). Distorted body image is associated with a number of unfavorable consequences, such as worse psychosocial functioning, poorer health behavior, and anorexia and bulimia. It is not known whether depression and obesity have a shared effect on body image, and whether the combined effect of both is larger than the effects of depression and obesity separately. Therefore, in the current study, we examined the separate and joint effects of depressive disorder, depressive symptoms, and BMI on both perceptual body size and body image dissatisfaction.

We used data of a large study that was conducted in the Netherlands: the Netherlands Study of Depression and Anxiety. All participants were adults between 18-65 years. For all participants, we determined whether they had depression, we measured their height and weight, and assessed body image during an interview and with self-report questionnaires.

We found that a high BMI was associated with a larger perceptual body size and with more body image dissatisfaction. Independent of this, depression severity contributed to a larger perceptual body size, and both current and remitted depression diagnosis as well as depression severity contributed to more body image dissatisfaction. The combined effect of depression and BMI was not stronger than the two separate effects.

The results of this study indicate that efforts in treatment should be made to reduce body image dissatisfaction in those suffering from depression, especially in those with a high BMI, as body image dissatisfaction can have long-lasting consequences in both mental and physical health.