Obesity is the most serious public health challenge of the 21st century, with at least 2.8 million people dying each year as a result of being overweight or obese. With diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers linked to being overweight, the need to understand eating behavior and promote healthier lifestyles is vital.

The University of Liverpool is home to the Kissileff Laboratory, the UK’s largest academic facility dedicated to the study of human ingestive behavior, and a renowned team of academic staff who are at the forefront of research into the behavioural and psychological processes that govern the way we eat.

We work with external organisations on a range of projects from developing new foods to improve diet and health, to testing treatments for obesity, to examining the effect of advertising on child eating behaviour.

Our well-equipped labs allow us to study eating behavior and appetite expression from the bench to analysis of the whole person.
Case study

Client: American Beverage Association

Challenge: The global rise in obesity is widely attributed to increased consumption of energy-dense foods and drinks. Consumption of foods and drinks that contain non-nutritive (or artificial) sweeteners (NNS) may help people reduce their energy intake while still enjoying sweet-tasting products. However, there are concerns around whether these products may promote a preference for sweet taste and, ultimately, be counter-productive for health and weight.

Solution: Researchers from the Appetite and Obesity Research Group are investigating the long-term effects of consuming NNS drinks on appetite during active weight loss. The SWITCH trial is the most extensive trial conducted to date to address these questions, with more than 400 participants drinking either NNS beverages or water while undertaking regular weight-loss sessions. The trial uses the group’s specialist facilities to measure appetite expression, energy intake, food choice, body composition and biomarkers.

Impact: Studying the effects of NNS beverages over time will help researchers to determine whether these products are effective in aiding weight loss and weight maintenance. Together, the results of this study will have broad implications for policy and practice with regard to obesity and health behaviours.

Why work with us?

- **Well equipped:** Access to the UK’s largest academic eating behaviour laboratory, complete with the latest equipment including iDXA for whole body composition analysis.
- **Broad expertise:** Renowned academics who collaborate and consult across disciplines including psychology, public health and behavioural science.
- **Strong connections:** Part of the Liverpool Obesity Research Network with links to people and facilities, giving us easy access to clinical populations for studies.
- **Industry links:** Excellent track record of working with external organisations including Coca Cola, Danone, Unilever and GlaxoSmithKline.