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Hungry and aggressive? Blame serotonin

Malaysia Sun
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(IANS)

Ever wonder why you sometimes turn aggressive when you are extremely hungry? The culprit may be serotonin, or rather the lack of it.

Low serotonin levels have long been associated with depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder and severe anxiety, but a new study says it is also linked to impulsiveness - and to aggression.

The essential amino acid required for the creation of serotonin can only be obtained through your diet. Consequently, serotonin levels decline when we don't eat, a fact noted by researchers.

Hence the link between hunger and aggression.

The study also provides an insight into clinical disorders characterised by low serotonin levels, such as depression and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), and may help explain some of the social difficulties associated with these disorders.

This research suggests that patients with depression and anxiety disorders may benefit from therapies that teach them strategies for regulating emotions during decision-making, particularly in social scenarios.

Molly Crockett, who conducted the research, said: "Our results suggest that serotonin plays a critical role in social decision-making by normally keeping aggressive social responses in check.

"Changes in diet and stress cause our serotonin levels to fluctuate naturally, so it's important to understand how this might affect our everyday decision-making."

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