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Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms and Body Mass Index among World Trade Center Disaster-Exposed Smokers: A Preliminary Examination of the Role of Anxiety Sensitivity

Samantha G. Farris^{a,b}*, Daniel J. Paulus^a, Adam Gonzalez^c, Brittain L. Mahaffey^c, Evelyn J. Bromet^c, Benjamin J. Luft^d, Roman Kotov^c, Michael J. Zvolensky^{a,e}

^aUniversity of Houston, Department of Psychology, Houston, TX, United States

^bAlpert Medical School of Brown University, Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, Providence, RI, United States

^bStony Brook University, Department of Psychiatry, Stony Brook, NY, United States

^cStony Brook University, Department of Medicine, Stony Brook, NY, United States

^dThe University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Department of Behavioral Science, Houston, TX, United States

*Corresponding author: Ms. Samantha G. Farris, at The University of Houston, Department of Psychology, 126 Fred J. Heyne Building, Suite 104, Houston, Texas 77204-5502, United States. (E-mail): sgfarris@uh.edu (Phone): 713-743-8056; (Fax): 713-743-8588.

Abstract

Among individuals exposed to the World Trade Center (WTC) disaster on September 11, 2001, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and symptoms are both common and associated with increased cigarette smoking and body mass. However, there is little information on the specific processes underlying the relationship of PTSD symptoms with body mass. The current study therefore is an initial exploratory test of anxiety sensitivity, the fear of internal bodily sensations, as a possible novel mechanism linking PTSD symptom severity and body mass index (BMI). Participants were 147 adult daily smokers (34.0% female) exposed to the WTC disaster (via rescue/recovery work or direct witness). The direct and indirect associations between PTSD symptom severity and BMI via anxiety sensitivity

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