Hunger and eating may not be under purely neural control. Recent research by Lutter et al. 2008 has shown that the body produces extra quantities of the hormone ghrelin in response to stress. This is part of the body’s natural defence against behaviours that are generally linked with stressful situations.

However, ghrelin also boosts appetite, leading to increased comfort-eating. This suggests that blocking the body’s response to ghrelin may help people with a tendency to comfort-eat to control their weight.

However this approach may be problematic as it would reduced ghrelin's benefits I'll effects as part of the body's response to stress.