

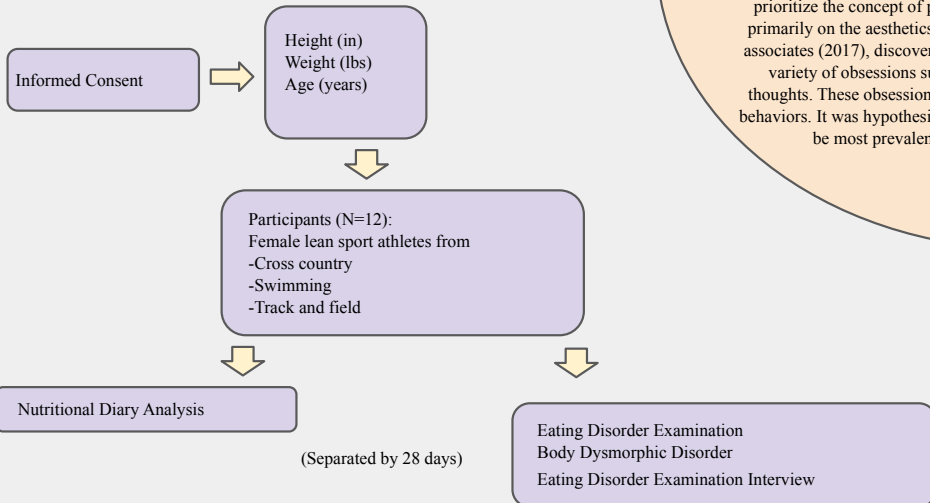


Prevalence of Eating/Body Disorders in Female Athletes

Abstract

According to the United States Mental Health First Aid (2013), the most common eating disorders are bulimia nervosa, anorexia nervosa, and binge eating. The purpose of this study was to explore the prevalence of eating and body disorders, specifically in lean sport female athletes. This study was strictly for research, and not diagnosing. A total of 12 female lean sport athletes, 18-23 years of age, volunteered from cross country, swimming, and track and field. Each participant that met the criteria for this study filled out an informed consent agreement prior to any participation. Each participant individually met with the researcher to review their responsibilities and expectations over the span of 28 days, while obtaining information about the questionnaires and interview they will complete on the 28th day. The participants tracked their food intake and thoughts for these 4 weeks, in which their diaries were analyzed individually. It was hypothesized that body dysmorphic disorder and anorexia was most prevalent in athletes participating in swimming.

Methods



Aaryn Fleming
Gardner-Webb University
Exercise Science

Introduction

The most common eating disorders are considered to be bulimia, anorexia, and binge eating, according to the United States Mental Health First Aid (2013). Additionally, the history of eating disorders is correlated with low self-esteem, guilt, desire for control, and a negative self-concept that have the ability to ultimately lead to a diagnosis as severe as depression (Arthure-Cameselle, 2011). The aim of this study was to research the prevalence of eating/body disorders found in lean sport female athletes. Furthermore, Reinking and Alexander (2005), wrote that lean sports consist of gymnastics, swimming, running, dance, distance running, and diving. In this study, only cross country, swimming, and track and field athletes were analyzed. Unfortunately, lean sports typically prioritize the concept of possessing a specific body type, as their values rely primarily on the aesthetics of their body image. Additionally, Weingarden and associates (2017), discovered that body dysmorphic disorders (BDD) contain a variety of obsessions such as urges, distressful images, and/or repetitive thoughts. These obsessions can easily be related to signs of disordered eating behaviors. It was hypothesized that the body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) would be most prevalent in swimmer female athletes in this study.

References

- Arthur-Cameselle, J. N., & Quatromoni, P. A. (2011). Factors Related to the Onset of Eating Disorders Reported by Female Collegiate Athletes, *The Sport Psychologist*, 25(1), 1-17. Retrieved Apr 8, 2020, from <https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/tsp/25/1/article-p1.xml>
- Do I Have BDD? (n.d.) Retrieved from <https://bdd.iocdf.org/about>
- bdd/do-i-have-bdd/#self-test
- Eating Disorder Examination.
- <https://www.corc.uk.net/outcome-experience-measures/eating-disorder-examination/>.
- "Mental Health First Aid." Mental Health First Aid, 10 October 2013, www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org
- Reinking, M. F. & Alexander, L. E. (2005). Prevalence of disordered-eating behaviors in undergraduate female collegiate athletes and nonathletes. *Journal of Athletic Training*, 40 (1), 47-51.
- Weingarden, H., Renshaw, K. D., Wilhelm, S., Tangney, J. P., & DiMauro, J. (2017) Anxiety and shame as risk factors for depression, suicidality, and functional impairment in body dysmorphic disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder. *J Nerv Ment Dis*. 204 (11), 832-839. <https://doi.org/10.1097/NMD.0000000000000498>.

Acknowledgments

Gardner-Webb University, Dr. Jeffrey Hartman, the Exercise Science Department, & Lean Sports Coaches and volunteers

Figure 1. Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire

PHENIX Toolkit
PhenX Measure: Psychopathology of Eating Disorders (P23100)
PhenX Protocol: Eating Disorders Examination- Questionnaire (P23104)

Date of Interview/Examination 08/05/2020

Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire © 2008-2010 Instructions: The following questions are concerned with the past four weeks (28 days) only. Please read each question carefully. Please answer all the questions. Thank you.

Questions 1 to 12: Please circle the appropriate number on the right. Remember that the questions only refer to the past four weeks (28 days) only.

On how many of the past 28 days...	No days	1-5 days	6-12 days	13-18 days	19-26 days	Every day
1. Have you been deliberately trying to limit the amount of food you eat to influence your shape or weight (whether or not you have succeeded)?	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Have you gone for long periods of time (8 waking hours or more without eating anything at all in order to influence your shape or weight?	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Have you tried to exclude from your diet any foods that you like in order to influence your shape or weight (whether or not you have succeeded)?	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Have you tried to follow dieting rules regarding your eating (for example, a calorie limit) in order to influence your shape or weight (whether or not you have succeeded)?	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Have you had a definite desire to have any single persons with the aim of influencing your shape or	0	1	2	3	4	5

Figure 2. Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire

Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire (BDDQ)

Name _____ Date _____

This questionnaire asks about concerns with physical appearance. Please read each question carefully and circle the answer that is true for you. Also write in answers where indicated.

1) Are you worried about how you look?

-If yes: Do you think about your appearance problems a lot and wish you could think about them less?

-If yes: Please list the body areas you don't like: _____

Example of disliked body areas include: your skin (for example, acne, scars, wrinkles, pores, redness); hair; the shape or size of your nose, mouth, jaw, lips, stomach, hips, etc.; or defects of your hands, genitals, breasts, or any other body part.

NOTE: If you answered "Yes" to either of the above questions, you are finished with this questionnaire. Otherwise please continue.

2) Is your main concern with how you look that you aren't thin enough or that you might get too fat?

3) How has this problem with how you look affected your life?

* Has it often upset you a lot? Yes No

* Has it often gotten in the way of doing things with friends, doing your relationships with people, or your social activities? Yes No

-If yes: Describe how: _____

* Has it caused you any problems with school, work, or other activities? Yes No

-If yes: What are they? _____

* Are there things you avoid because of how you look? Yes No

-If yes: What are they? _____

4) On an average day, how much time do you usually spend thinking about how you look? (Add up all the time you spend in total in a day then circle one.)

(a) Less than 1 hour a day (b) 1-3 hours a day (c) More than 3 hours a day