

PSIWORLD 2014

The risk of eating disorders in adolescence and its association with the impact of the sociocultural attitudes towards appearance

Mustață Andreea-Elena*

Bucuresti University, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, 90 Panduri Avenue, Bucharest, Romania

Abstract

This paper studies whether there is an association between the risk of developing an eating disorder in adolescence and social attitudes concerning appearance, especially those circulated in the media. The sample was composed of 119 subjects, and the instruments used were EAT-26 and SATAQ. The results indicate the existence of statistically significant correlations between the risk of eating disorders in adolescence and all facets of social and cultural attitudes regarding appearance: importance, pressure, internalization / TV-magazines, internalizing / athlete, internalizing / comparison, awareness. When statistical analyses are performed differently in boys and girls, we see the existence of different intensities of these correlations. This result indicates that future studies could orientate to test the hypothesis of the existence of gender differences in this regard.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license

(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of the Scientific Committee of PSIWORLD 2014.

Keywords: risk of eating disorders; social attitudes towards appearance; adolescence.

1. Theoretical framework

During adolescence the risk of developing an eating disorder may be high; Makino, Tsuboi and Dennerstein (2006) indicated that Western teenagers, especially girls, display some anomalies in attitude towards food, therefore we can talk about subclinical eating disorders. Such disturbances in eating behaviour in teenagers, such as: diets, using laxatives, inducing vomiting, compulsive eating were reported as well by Sepulveda, Carrobes and Gandrillas (2008). The way the media contribute to lower satisfaction in relation to one's own body, personal satisfaction and the occurrence of eating disorders symptoms is still debated in the literature, as suggested by Ferguson et al. (2014).

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: andreamustata14@gmail.com

Derene and Beresin (2006) found that adolescents are exposed continuously to elusive body images that are constantly reminded through television, internet, movies and magazines, and media exposure in adolescence is a predictor of eating behavior disturbance and of a thinner body ideal (Harrison, Hefner, 2006). Although considered to be specific to Western culture, it seems that eating disorders affect other cultures as well, with the authors stating that this happens as the relevant cultures take over the ideal of being thin from the Western culture through facilitating access to media in Western countries (Witcomb et al. 2013). The socio-cultural model of physical attractiveness in women requires a body as thin as possible and male model requires rather a developed musculature. In adolescence, both girls and boys begin to gain weight and have more fat deposits, and their body begins to have a different look than before (Vaughan and Halpern, 2010), which can make this age group more vulnerable regarding the risk of eating disorders.

Magallares (2013) studied several social risk factors regarding the emergence of eating disorders: social comparison, social attitudes regarding appearance, social anxiety; the results of the study highlight the positive direct and indirect correlation (mediated by social anxiety) between social comparisons and the risk of developing an eating disorder and indirect correlation (through social anxiety) between social attitudes regarding appearance and the risk of developing an eating disorder. Rodgers, Paxton and Chabrol (2010) describe depression as the moderator of social and cultural influences regarding the symptoms of eating disorders, in both boys and girls.

Thompson and Stice (2001) showed that the internalization of the thin ideal results from the internalization of attitudes that are approved by significant people or by people who are respected and valued. Thus the family, friends and media are such sources from which adolescents can 'borrow' the same attitude. People who internalize the ideal of being thin develop cognitive schemas which associate thin bodies with positive attributes such as happiness, desirability and social status (Ahern, Bennett and Hetherington, 2008). Also, programs which emphasize the idealization of thin bodies can put pressure on teenagers, which could lead to a stronger lack of satisfaction in relation to one's body and disturbed eating behaviors (Chang et al. 2013).

In boys as well scientific literature indicates a number of social expectations on appearance sent by the media, and Hatoum and Belle (2004) showed that expectations in the case of boys are for them to be thin and have a smooth musculature, which may be related to obsessive weight control behaviour and physical strain or the use of steroids. The study conducted by Calado et al. (2010) reveals that teenagers, both girls and boys, with increased risk of eating disorders, had an increased exposure to TV programs and magazines related to body image, with a small difference between the behaviour of girls and boys.

2. Objectives and Hypotheses

2.1. Objectives

This study is aimed to investigate whether there is a correlation statistically significant between the risk of developing an eating disorder in adolescence and the impact of sociocultural attitudes towards appearance, particularly those circulating in the media, both at global level and differentiated by gender.

3. Method

3.1. Instruments

The instruments used were EAT-26 (The Eating Attitude Test-26), to assess the risk of developing an eating disorder, and to assess the impact of social and cultural attitudes to appearance The Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Scale (SATAQ) was used, consisting of six subscales: importance, pressure, internalization / TV-magazines, internalizing / athlete, internalizing / comparison, awareness. The value reported for the English version is 0.90 (Garner et al., 1982) for EAT-26, value obtained on a sample composed of persons with anorexia nervosa, the authors noting that the instrument can be used also on non-clinical samples. The Cronbach-Alpha value is 0.96 for SATAQ (Thompson et al., 2004). Because the instruments were translated from English, their internal consistency was calculated after they had been applied to a sample of 31 subjects, into a previous stage of testing, to establish the opportunity of their usage inside the study. The values of Cronbach-Alpha for the Romanian version

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1110321>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1110321>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)