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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Does self-esteem affect body dissatisfaction levels in female adolescents?☆

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KEYWORDS

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Imagem corporal;
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Abstract

Objective: To evaluate the influence of self-esteem on levels of body dissatisfaction among adolescent females.

Methods: A group of 397 adolescents aged 12 to 17 years were enrolled in the study. The Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ) was applied to assess body dissatisfaction. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used to assess self-esteem. Weight, height, and skinfold thickness were also measured. These anthropometric data were controlled in the statistical analyses. **Results:** The multiple regression model indicated influence of “positive self-esteem” ($R^2=0.16$; $p=0.001$) and “negative self-esteem” ($R^2=0.23$; $p=0.001$) subscales on the BSQ scores. Univariate analysis of covariance demonstrated differences in BSQ scores ($p=0.001$) according to groups of self-esteem.

Conclusion: It was concluded that self-esteem influenced body dissatisfaction in adolescent girls from Juiz de Fora, MG.

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A autoestima afeta a insatisfação corporal em adolescentes do sexo feminino?

Resumo

Objetivo: O objetivo do estudo foi avaliar a influência da autoestima na insatisfação corporal de adolescentes do sexo feminino.

Métodos: Participaram 397 adolescentes com idade entre 12 e 17 anos. Utilizou-se o Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ) para avaliar a insatisfação corporal. A Escala de Autoestima de Rosenberg foi utilizada para avaliar a autoestima. Foram mensurados peso corporal,

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estatura e dobras cutâneas. Esses dados antropométricos foram controlados nas análises estatísticas.

Resultados: O modelo de regressão múltipla indicou influência das subescalas “autoestima positiva” ($R^2=0,16$; $p=0,001$) e “autoestima negativa” ($R^2=0,23$; $p=0,001$) nos escores do BSQ. A análise univariada de covariância demonstrou diferenças nos escores do BSQ ($p=0,001$) em razão dos grupos de autoestima.

Conclusão: Concluiu-se que a autoestima influenciou a insatisfação corporal em meninas adolescentes de Juiz de Fora/MG.

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Introduction

Adolescence is a period comprising the age range of 10 to 19 years old,¹ during which several psychological, social, and morphological changes² occur. Evidence indicates increased responsibility, demands, and changes in friendship among adolescents.³ Scientific investigations also indicate the increased percentage of body fat in females during adolescence.^{4,5} These and other modifications may influence body image.

Body image refers to a multifaceted construct, encompassing perception, emotion, feelings, and thoughts directed to one's own body.⁶ Body dissatisfaction, classified as a component of body image, concerns the dissatisfaction with one's weight, appearance, and physical shape.⁷ Studies have shown a prevalence of body dissatisfaction ranging from 10% to 40% among adolescents.^{2,8} More specifically, it appears that this prevalence may be even higher among female adolescents.⁹⁻¹² Body dissatisfaction may be associated with self-esteem.¹³⁻¹⁴

Self-esteem is related to the set of feelings and thoughts of the individual regarding his/her own worth, competence, and suitability, which results in a positive or negative attitude towards oneself.¹³ Self-esteem is subdivided into negative and positive. The first refers to feelings of worthlessness and failure and the second is related to the feelings of satisfaction and appreciation of oneself.¹³ Flament *et al*⁸ indicate that the main point of self-esteem is the evaluative aspect, which influences how the individual sets his goals, accepts himself, values others, and projects his expectations for the future.¹³

Self-esteem is considered one of the main predictors of favorable outcomes in adolescence, with implications in areas such as interpersonal relationships and academic performance.¹³ In contrast, the influence of this characteristic has also been observed in adverse problems such as aggression, antisocial behavior, delinquency in youth, and negative changes in body image.^{8,14,15}

Evidence has shown a positive association between negative self-esteem and body dissatisfaction.^{8,16} Similarly, previous studies showed an inversely proportional association between positive self-esteem and body dissatisfaction.^{14,17} However, these investigations were developed with populations from Chile, the United States, and Canada. A search was performed with some descriptors (body image, self-esteem and adolescents) in the main scientific databases (SciELO, PubMed, and Scopus), and no research was found that attempted to analyze the influence of self-esteem on

body dissatisfaction in Brazilian adolescents. The findings of such a study could assist professionals who work directly with adolescents in the organization of meetings, lectures, and discussions that have body in adolescence as the central focus. Given the above, the aim of the study was to evaluate the association between self-esteem and body dissatisfaction in female Brazilian adolescents.

Methods

This was a cross-sectional, school-based study conducted during 2012 and 2013 in the city of Juiz de Fora, state of Minas Gerais, Brazil, with female adolescents aged between 12 and 17 years. According to information from the Education Secretariat of Juiz de Fora, the population of female adolescents aged 12 to 17 years enrolled in municipal schools in 2012 was approximately 41,000. Thus, sample size calculation was performed using the following criteria, following the recommendations of Alves *et al*:⁹ 30% prevalence of body dissatisfaction, according to the findings of Fortes *et al*,¹¹ 95% confidence, 5% sampling error, and the total value was increased by 20% due to possible losses, totaling 387 students necessary for a representative sample. Sample size calculation was performed using EpiInfo software (release 3.5) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Georgia - USA).

The proportional sample was stratified according to the location of schools in the sociogeographic regions of Juiz de Fora (North, Central, and South) and the type of school (public or private), and then distributed into primary and secondary education. The selection was performed randomly through simple drawing, in two stages. First the drawing of the schools was performed in each region, and then the drawing of adolescents in these units. The schools were selected from the list provided by the statistics section of the Education Secretariat of the State of Minas Gerais. The final study sample was divided into six different sampling sites (schools) and consisted of randomly selected female adolescents that were present in the schools on the collection days.

Only adolescents whose parents or guardians signed the informed consent and who were regularly enrolled in an elementary or high school in the city of Juiz de Fora/MG during 2012 or 2013 were included. A total of 439 girls were chosen to participate, of whom 42 were excluded for not appropriately completing the questionnaire or not participating in anthropometric assessments; thus a final sample of 397 adolescents was assessed.

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