A study on the extent of Eating Disorders amongst adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Background: Eating disorders are characterized by severe disturbances in eating behavior and adolescents is a stage in which individuals are more affected by fitness ideals hence more prone to eating disorders. Eating disorders are serious emotional and physical problems that can have life-threatening consequences for females and males. The present study examined the extent level of Eating disorder and gender differences for Eating disorder among adolescents.

Methodology: This study involved 300 adolescents (150 male and 150 female) studying in 11th and 12th class in age range of 15-18 years, has been selected from various inter college in Gorakhpur city through random sampling. Two questionnaire were administered first was a general demographical questionnaire and second was the short version of the Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26) was used to assess the respondents attitude toward and preoccupation with food, dieting, eating, physical appearance and personal control over eating.

Results: Based on the scoring, respondents were categories into low risk (0-19) and high risk (20 or more). The result showed that, 30.67% female and 18% male showed a high risk of Eating Disorder and scored above the recommended cut-off point on Eating Attitude Test- 26, and females had higher EAT-26 scores compare to males.

Conclusion: Eating Disorder is growing problem among adolescents and the results indicate a high extent of disturbed eating attitudes among adolescents.

Keywords: Eating Disorder, Adolescents, Extent.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the American Psychiatric Association [1], eating disorder are characterized by severe disturbance in eating behavior of the individual intended to control body weight and accompanied by distorted body image. Furthermore, ED are diagnosed by the criteria of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders fourth edition-text revised on (DSM-IV-TR) and include two specific types: anorexia nervosa (AN) and bulimia nervosa (BN).

Eating disorder mostly begin during adolescence, they constitute a rather small but a most serious group of mental disturbances with elevated risk for Chronicity or death [2-3]. Krause and others [4] point out that "a sense of depression, loss and helplessness is often associated with eating disorders. Eating disorders play important role in adolescent development during puberty nutritional behavior can however change. Eating disorders and anorexia nervosa in particular are among the deadliest psychiatric disorders [5]. The aims of the following study was -

- 1. To examine the extent level of eating disorders among adolescents in Gorakhpur city
- 2. To examine the gender differences for eating disorder among adolescents in Gorakhpur city.

METHODOLOGY

Respondents: Respondents of the present study consisted of 300 adolescents (150 male and 150 female) studying in 11th and 12th class in age range of 15-18 years, has been selected from various inter college in Gorakhpur city. The sampling method adopted for the present study was random sampling technique.

Tools: Two questionnaires were administered to the respondents, first was a general demographical questionnaire regarding their age, class, gender etc. The second was the short version of the Eating Attitude Test (EAT-26) was used to assess the respondent's attitudes toward and their preoccupation with food, dieting, eating, physical appearance and personal control over eating. Eat-26 index has two categories: 0-19 is low risk and 20 or more indicate high risk [6].

RESULTS

Table 1 - Distribution of respondents according to the Age and Gender

Age	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
	(N=150)		(N=150)	
15	16	10.67	21	14
16	44	29.33	55	36.67
17	65	43.33	53	35.33
18	25	16.67	21	14

The above table shows that majority of respondents were 16 and 17 years.

Table 2 - Extent of Eating Disorder among Adolescents

High risk	Percentage	Low risk	Percentage
73	24.33	227	75.67

The above table shows that 24.33% adolescents were High risk category for Eating Disorder, whereas 75.67% adolescents were Low risk category.

Table 3 - Extent of Eating Disorder among Adolescents

Gender	High risk	Percentage	Low risk	Percentage
Male	27	18	123	82
Female	46	30.67	104	69.33

The above table shows that 18% of male and 20.67% of female were High risk category for Eating Disorder, whereas 82% male and 69.33% female were Low risk category.

The table below shows that majority of 16 and 17 years respondents were high risk category for Eating Disorder and 12.33% of high risk category respondents were 15 years.

Table 4- Eating Disorder based on Age

Age	High risk	Percentage	Low risk	Percentage
15	9	12.33	28	12.33
16	24	32.88	75	33.04
17	29	39.72	89	39.21
18	11	15.07	35	15.42

DISCUSSION

According to the obtained results in this study, 30.67% female and 18% male showed a high risk of Eating Disorder and scored above the recommended cut-off point on Eating Attitude Test- 26, and it is considered as a high figure according to the previous researches.

In their study in the United States, Fisher and others [7] found that 17.5% suburban females and 15% urban females achieved pathologic EAT-26. Researchers have investigated that prevalence of eating disorder through a cross sectional survey in which 1990 adolescent boys and girls, and they found that 24.2% adolescents were at risk of Eating Disorder and scored above the recommended cut-off point on EAT-26 [8]. 15% male in this study had a high EAT-26 score, while in an Israeli study [9] found that 1.5% of urban males had a high score. However, there is a very few study on eating attitudes among males.

As expected, significant differences were found between male and female in the total scores of disturbed eating attitudes, female having the highest score. These results are in line with previous research [10].

Eating Disorder and disturbed eating attitudes and behavior are well-documented problems, in particular among females [11-13]. However, in the past four decades, the prevalence of eating disorders has also risen among adolescent boys [14-16]. Although the prevalence of eating disorders is still higher among females, there are many similarities in risk factors for eating disorders shared by both genders [17].

CONCLUSION

The obtained extent of Eating Disorder was higher in our study compare than previous studies. Females were high risk of EAT-26 cut off score compare to males. Further research is needed to develop intervention programs to prevent eating disorder among adolescents.

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