



What is the Association Between Parental Behaviors and Attitudes and the Development of Disordered Eating Behaviors in their Children

Presenter: Gabriela Cohen, MSDI Simmons University
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Elizabeth Metallinos-Katsaras, PhD, RD

Introduction

In the United States, At least 30 million individuals across all genders and ages experience an eating disorder. Personality, genetics, parental modeling of eating behaviors and environmental factors play a big role in the development of eating disorders. The purpose of this literature review was to examine the published research on the association between parental behaviors and attitudes and the development of disordered eating behaviors in their children.

Methodology

- Databases: Medline, Academic Search Ultimate, Business Source Premier, Cinahl Complete, Eric and Psycarticles
- Key words included Eating Habits AND Eating Behaviors AND Eating Disorders AND Parental Influence AND Parental Attitudes AND Parental Involvement
- Published between 2012-2019
- Papers excluded further if the children or parent had an already diagnosed eating or mental disorder
- A total of 16 peer-reviewed articles were reviewed

Including Parental and Family Therapy into the Prevention and Treatment Programs for Disordered Eating Behaviors in Children and Adolescents may be Beneficial



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Conclusion

The results of this review suggest the need for intervention programs that help parents create a healthy environment for children to develop a healthy body image and reduce the risk of disordered eating. The next step, would be to research counseling approaches to create an awareness and initiation to change in parents regarding the way they communicate about weight and eating, their feeding practices, and involvement in their children and adolescents' lives.

Results

The results were analyzed based on 3 exposures measures:

Parental Feeding Practices:

- Studied in 5 of the 16 studies
- Parental pressure to eat and food restriction were positively associated with loss of control over eating in their children

Parental Encouragement to Diet:

- Studied in 8 of the 16 studies
- Besides maternal fat talk being significant associated with disordered eating behaviors in their children, it was also significant correlated with children commenting about their own weight and increased body dissatisfaction

Parental Functioning and Involvement:

- Studied in 5 of the 16 studies
- The interaction between low monitoring and low warmth, was significantly associated with increase odds of experiencing body dissatisfaction
- The frequency of family sit-down dinner and mindful parenting was inversely associated with disordered eating behaviors in their children

