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### Eating Disorders as a Lens Social Change in China

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# EATING DISORDERS AS A LENS SOCIAL CHANGE IN CHINA

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The rate of eating disorders in Chinese women has historically remained much lower than surrounding countries. Following the reform era, however, the incidence of these disorders has increased drastically. The aim of this paper is to examine the sociocultural changes that have led to this recent penetration of eating disorders in Chinese society. This paper first examines the changing body ideals for women, looking at the recent skinny idolization following the Mao era, and the implications this change has on the current mindset of Chinese women. The paper will then analyze the changing social roles of women by examining the developing educational opportunities and the elimination of domestic duties, and discuss how these changes lead to psychological pressure driving disordered eating. Finally, the paper will look at the diagnosis and treatment of eating disorders, and how the delay in adequate treatment has contributed to the rising rates of the disorders seen today. These three factors show how the post-Mao environment in China has created increased psychological pressure on women, leading to the high incidence of eating disorders occurring today.