

Eating Disorders and the Media

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Abstract: Eating disorders are an increasingly common problem affecting younger people. These are of different types with effects and symptoms related to both the physical and the psychic side. The media is the main tool that leads to the spread of an image considered ideal which then induces a feeling of dissatisfaction among the population and a desire to reach that physical ideal. Thus, eating disorders arise from the desire to be someone else and to overcome an image of a fragile self.

Keywords: eating disorders; media; anorexia; bulimia; influence

Defining

An eating disorder is a mental disorder defined by abnormal eating habits that adversely affect a person's physical and mental health. Eating disorders refer to several psychological disorders that determine the development of unhealthy eating habits. It can start from an obsession with food, body weight or body shape. In severe cases, eating disorders can cause serious health consequences and can even lead to death if left untreated. Eating problems can occur at any stage of life but usually occur during adolescence or adulthood. Eating disorders commonly coexist with other conditions, such as anxiety disorders, substance abuse or depression.

Types

Among the most common forms of eating disorders are anorexia, bulimia and binge eating disorder. Anorexia nervosa (AN) is characterized by the lack of maintaining healthy body weight, an obsessive fear of gaining weight or refusing to do so and an

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unrealistic perception of body weight. Anorexia can lead to menstruation, loss of bone strength, loss of skin integrity, very stressful heart, increasing the risk of heart attacks and related heart problems. The risk of death is very high in people with this disease. The most underlined factors that researchers are beginning to consider are related to the fact that this disease may not only be a matter of vanity, social or media concern but may also be related to biological and genetic. The rate of anorexia in the general population between the ages of 11 and 65 is from 0 to 2.2% in women and around 0.3% among men.

Bulimia nervosa (BN) refers to an eating disorder in which repeated eating occurs, followed by behaviors that compensate for overeating, such as vomiting, excessive physical exercise or extreme use of laxatives or diuretics. Personal with this type of disorder eats large amounts of food in a specific period then tries to get rid of the calories accumulated by different methods. They are afraid of gaining weight even though they have normal body weight. Bulimia affects women 9 times more than men. Binge eating disorder (BED) includes people who frequently lose control over their diet. What makes it different from bulimia nervosa is that it does not involve compensatory behaviors to eliminate excessively ingested food. For this reason, many people suffering from this disorder may be obese and have an increased risk of developing other conditions, such as cardiovascular disease. The disorder can develop in individuals with a wide range of ages and socioeconomic classes. BED is more common in women than men.

Causes

The causes of eating disorders are not clear so many people with eating disorders also have body dysmorphic disorders, changing the way a person perceives themselves. Studies have found that a large proportion of individuals diagnosed with body dysmorphic disorders also had a type of eating disorder. It is also considered that environmental, social and interpersonal problems can lead to the promotion and support of these diseases. Most of the time the media is blamed for increasing the incidence of eating disorders because based on the personalities that they promote having a specific physical form of the body, they encourage and motivate people to follow them to lose and reach that form. by the resemblance to the people promoted. The media is also accused of distorting reality, by the fact that the people depicted by it are either naturally thin and thus unreported to normal or unnaturally weak, forcing their body to look like the ideal image, putting a lot of pressure on it. big on

themselves to look a certain way. The causes that lead to eating disorders are related to the psychological side, the socio-cultural environment, and even a genetic component. Certain personality traits are associated with the development of eating disorders. These are accentuated in adolescence due to a combination of physiological and cultural factors, such as hormonal changes, stress related to the awareness of the approach of maturity and the expectations perceived especially related to certain areas of the body. Eating disorders are associated with fragile self-image and disordered mentalization. The causes that concern the environment and which lead to the development and increase of eating disorders are found physical, psychological, sexual and neglect of children. Social isolation has negative effects on the physical and emotional well-being of people. In trying to overcome these effects of social isolation, people resort to the emotional nutrition that sources what comfort. Also, the influence of parents is an important part of the development of eating disorders in children. This is manifested by the genetic predisposition of the family, the dietary choices, the body's shape and the eating patterns of the parents, the degree of involvement and expectations related to the eating behavior of their children, but also the interpersonal relationship between the parent and the child.

Symptoms

Within the psychopathological symptoms of eating disorders are those related to body image, body weight, and shape, weight gain and denial of how serious the symptoms are and distortion of how the body is perceived. The main psychopathological characteristics of eating disorders are related to the perception of the body, processing of emotions and interpersonal relationships. Within these disorders there is a dissatisfaction related to the perception of the body, there is a change associated with the dissociation of certain parts of the body from the whole body as a whole. These symptoms are closely correlated with the low self-esteem of the patients.

Treatment

Treatment for eating disorders is achieved through the collaboration of the dietician doctor, the psychiatrist and the therapist, of course depending on the severity of the disease. Thus, in the case of the psychotherapeutic part, cognitive-behavioral therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, cognitive remedial therapy, family

therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, music therapy, art therapy, nutritional counseling, and medical nutrition therapy are used. In addition to these are added various medicines and hospital care.

The Influence of the Media on Eating Disorders

There is a cultural emphasis placed on the image of a weak body. It is the media that promotes this physical ideal which leads to dissatisfaction with body image, the dysmorphic disorder of the body and eating disorders. The image of the ideal body presented by the company puts pressure on the consumers to evaluate themselves according to what is presented. Based on advertisements and magazines that feature famous people for their slim appearance and physique, people are entitled to consider acceptance by others as something to be achieved at any price.

The fashion world has the greatest influence on eating disorders. The media has always presented models within the fashion shows as weak as possible. Young people who want to reach models are often asked to lose weight and maintain their weight to be successful. Through the image presented by the media of the weak models, adolescents are the most influential and this leads to a distorted perception of their own body and of the desire to reach that much-desired ideal. In the fashion industry, models most often weight the limit accepted by the World Health Organization, which leads to the development of eating disorders. In France and other countries that are known for their impact on fashion, legal measures are being taken to prevent models from having a body mass index (BMI defined as weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters) below 18. this is beneficial for reducing the growth of eating disorders.

But not only in the fashion industry do people with eating problems meet, and the world of sport is another area where these disorders are often encountered. Gymnastics, horseback riding, wrestling, and dancing are just a few categories of weight-bearing sports. Eating disorders among individuals participating in competitive activities, especially women, often lead to physical and biological changes related to their weight, which often mimics prepubescent stages. Often, as women's bodies change, they lose their competitive advantage, which leads them to take extreme measures to maintain their younger body shape.

The media influences eating disorders, whether they are shown in a positive or negative light, then it is their responsibility to use caution when promoting images that project an ideal that many achieve by developing eating disorders.

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