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Body Self-perceptions of Students in Exercise Science Major

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College aged students can be particularly vulnerable to body image issues, eating disorders and exercise dependency. PURPOSE The purpose of this study was to explore body self-perceptions of students majoring in exercise science. **METHODS** Twenty-two junior and senior students (13 females, 9 males) took part in this study. Participants responded to a 12-item Qualtrics survey that gauged their body self-perceptions, eating and exercise behaviors. **RESULTS** Descriptive analyses indicated that close to 91% of the participants felt self-conscious about their body image. Over 95% of the participants indicated that their body weight is a relatively important topic as compared to other things in their life. Close to 72% of the participants indicated feeling fat at least sometime. Over 68% of the participants reported the need to engage in excessive exercise meaning feeling compelled to exercise no matter what, even when sick and injured. Finally, 50% of the participants indicated that some of the exercise labs made them think more about the way they looked. Additional qualitative data revealed that some respondents felt insecure at the beginning of some exercise labs (i.e., BMI, weight, waist circumference measurements and skinfold assessments). However, these participants also indicated that the labs helped them become more aware of their own personal health and take proper measures to improve it. CONCLUSION Despite their presence in the field, students in exercise science major can be vulnerable to unhealthy self-perceptions and dysfunctional eating and exercise behaviors. Exercise labs can help students attain realistic expectations about themselves and take measures to improve their health.