

*Originalni članci/
Original articles*

EATING ATTITUDES AND PHYSICAL
APPEARANCE IN ADOLESCENTS GIRLS

STAVOVI ADOLESCENTKINJA U VEZI
ISHRANE I TJELESNOG IZGLEDA

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Abstract

Introduction: Eating disorders are more common in women; especially adolescent girls are at risk.

Objective: To assess whether the adolescent girls in Banjaluka (Republika Srpska- B&H) are satisfied with their present physical appearance and weight. To analyze views about their appearance.

Methods: The survey was conducted among female adolescents, aged 16–17, in all secondary schools in Banjaluka, using the modified Eating Attitudes Test - EAT-26. The response rate was 1956 (87.3%) out of 2240 (total number in first and second grade female students).

Results: Almost ½ of surveyed with BMI <18.5 kg/m² were sometimes dissatisfied with their body image. More than ½ (54.8%) with BMI 18.5-25 kg/m² were sometimes dissatisfied with their appearance, while 1 of 10 respondents had that feeling often. Nearly 1/5 declared that they often wanted to be slimmer. With statistically significant differences, the surveyed students with BMI <18 kg/m² stated that they were unaware of calorie value of foods compared to students with BMI of 18-25 kg/m². ($\chi^2=63.7$, df=24, p=0.000). Nearly 1/3 of respondents were always, very often, and often familiar with calorie values of food.

Discussion: Unrealistic idea of the size of the body can carry different health risks. They range from inadequate child attempts to inability to recognize and stop the weight gain.

Conclusion: The survey highlights the need for education of young people in order to accept a healthy lifestyle.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is characterized by significant physical, emotional and intellectual changes, and changes in social roles, relationships and expectations. This is a time of growth, which is characterized by the change in body proportion, size, weight and body image, emotional changes, new sleep patterns and needs, development of sexuality and reproductive functions. These changes are a normal transition from childhood to adulthood. Adolescents are experiencing these changes in different ways. Adolescent girls are often concerned about their bodily appearance, express dissatisfaction with their appearance, weight and want to lose weight.

Girls in adolescence often perceive themselves as fatter than they really are and that is why they want to be slimmer and start dieting. Although most of these attitudes and behavior related to nutrition are benign, their can bear sig-

nificant psychological and medical risks. These risks are not infrequently associated with increasing risk of clinically manifested eating disorders. The conduct related to eating disorders is associated with increasing risk of risky behavior such as smoking, consumption of alcohol and psychoactive substances, development of depression and suicidal behavior.

Eating disorders are more common in women. Especially teenage girls and young women are at greater risk of eating disorders, because they are preoccupied with their body shape, weight and diet.

Eating disorders involve serious disturbances in behavior related to nutrition (to eat too much or too little) ⁽¹⁾. They are unhealthy eating patterns and include anorexia nervosa, bulimia and non-specific eating disorders. Anorexia nervosa and bulimia are among the most common eating disorders in the developed western world. Images of beauty send a strong message to all women about what our culture expects them

to become or what bodily appearance is desirable. A sad truth is that trying to look perfect, a young girl divides her "self" and her esteem becomes dependent on the reflection she sees in the mirror or on the number of pounds she reads on the balance.

People with anorexia nervosa refuse to maintain body weight above or at the minimum normal body weight, they have intense fear of gaining weight and express significant disturbance in perception of their own bodily shape and size (2).

While people with bulimia nervosa are subject to excessive intake of food, with a sense of loss of control over eating (in a sense that they cannot stop eating or cannot control what and how much they eat), then use a compensatory behavior to prevent weight gain, such as induced vomiting, intensive exercising or abuse of laxatives, diuretics, and starvation. They also attach exaggerated importance to their bodily shape and weight. (3).

The development of eating disorder is considered to be a result of combination of biological, psychological and social factors (4, 5, 6).

OBJECTIVE

The aim of the research is to assess whether the adolescent girls in Banjaluca are satisfied with their real physical bodily appearance and weight, and to determine, by analyzing their attitudes toward their own appearance.

Table 1. Number of students who made up the sample, and the number and percentage of students who responded to both questionnaires

Ordinal	Schols	Classis			Total number of students			Surveyed number of students			
		total	first	second	total	first	second	total	first	second	%
1.	Medical	18	8	10	406	192	214	372	175	197	91.6
2.	Economic	18	9	9	489	227	262	446	214	232	91.2
3.	Technology	20	10	10	453	248	205	413	231	182	91.2
4.	Agriculture	16	8	8	141	77	64	122	65	57	86.5
5.	Catering	22	10	12	315	145	170	218	135	83	69.2
6.	Grammar	19	9	10	405	200	205	361	176	185	89.1
7.	Music	3	2	1	31	14	17	24	10	14	77.4
Total		116	56	60	2240	1103	1137	1956	1006	950	87.3

Table 2. Classification of students in secondary schools by body mass index

Ordinal	Schols	Body mass index-BMI (kg/m ²)						Unknown	Total		
		<18.5		18.5-25		>25					
		f	%	f	%	f	%				
1.	Medical	25	6.7	325	87.1	16	4.3	7	1.9	373	100
2.	Economic	26	5.8	392	88.1	18	4.0	9	2.0	445	100
3.	Technology	34	8.2	333	80.6	23	5.6	23	5.6	413	100
4.	Agriculture	13	10.6	97	79.5	9	7.4	3	2.5	122	100
5.	Catering	23	10.6	169	77.5	13	5.9	13	5.9	218	100
6.	Grammar	26	7.2	307	85.0	14	3.9	14	3.9	361	100
7.	Music	3	12.5	18	75.0	0	-	3	12.5	24	100
Total		150	7.7	1641	83.9	93	4.7	72	3.7	1956	100

METHOD

The survey was conducted in seven secondary schools in Banjaluca in February 2007. Out of total seven middle schools, all first and second grade female students, aged 16 and 17, from 116 classes, were selected as a sample.

The survey was carried out by student interviewers during a 45 minute school hour, in teacher's presence. Instructions were given on how to complete the survey, which was anonymous and voluntary.

Out a total of 2240 I and II grade student girls of secondary schools surveyed, 1956 (87.3%), which were the day of the class, responded to the questionnaire- 91.2% in the first grade and 83.5% (950 out of total 1137), in the second grade. (Table 1)

In this survey a modified EAT-26 questionnaire was used, while the girls recorded their weight and height by themselves. (Garner, Olmsted, Bohr, & Garfinkel, 1982). was used as a survey. It addressed items like satisfaction with one's body image, body weight and attitudes to diet and your body. (7)

The Epi Info 2002 statistical program for statistical processing of collected questionnaire responses and the 95% assessment interval for estimation of accuracy degree were used.

RESULTS

Of total number of female students who filled the survey (1956), the highest percentage (83.4%) had BMI of 18.5-25 kg/m², while 150 (7.7%) had BMI <18.5 kg/m² and 4.7% had BMI > 25 kg/m². (Table 2.)

Almost 1/2 of surveyed students with BMI <18.5 kg/m² stated that they were sometimes dissatisfied with their bodily appearance, 40.7% that they have never been dissatisfied with their appearance. 12.7% declared that they sometimes wanted to be slimmer, while 82.7% never had that feeling. 2.0% of subjects induced vomiting by themselves, while 97.3% never did that. (Table 3)

More than 1/2 (54.8%) of surveyed students with BMI of 18.5-25 kg/m² were sometimes dissatisfied with their appearance, while 1 of 10 surveyed stated that they often have that feeling. Almost 1/5 said that they often wanted to be slimmer, and 41.9% had that desire sometimes, while 38.3% never wanted to be slimmer 2.1% of surveyed subjects induced vomiting by themselves, and 97.1% never did that. (Table 4)

With statistically significant difference, surveyed students with BMI <18 kg / m² declared that they were unfamiliar with caloric values of foods in relation to the surveyed students with BMI of 18-25 kg/m². (Chi-squared = 63.7, df = 24, p = 0.000)

Table 3. A response of adolescent girls with BMI<18.5 kg/m²

		Unsatisfied with their bodily appearance	want to be slimmer	Self-induced vomiting
Never	f	61	124	146
	%(CI)	40.7 (32.7-49.0)	82.7 (75.6-88.4)	97.3 (93.3-99.3)
Somtimes	f	74	19	3
	%(CI)	49.3 (41.1-57.6)	12.7 (7.8-19.1)	2.0 (0.4-5.7)
Often	f	13	6	0
	%(CI)	8.7 (4.7-14.4)	4.0 (1.5-8.5)	0.0
No response	f	2	1	1
	%(CI)	1.3 (0.2-4.7)	0.7 (0.0-3.7)	0.7(0.0-3.7)
Total	f	150	150	150
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4. Response of adolescent girls with BMI 18.5-25 kg/m²

		Unsatisfied with their bodily appearance	Want to be slimmer	Self-induced vomiting
Never	f	576	629	1594
	%(CI)	35.1 (32.8-37.5)	38.3 (36.0-40.7)	97.1
Somtimes	f	899	687	35
	%(CI)	54.8 (52.3-57.2)	41.9 (39.5-44.3)	2.1 (1.5-3.0)
Often	f	164	324	11
	%(CI)	10.0 (8.6-11.6)	19.7 (17.9-21.8)	0.7 (0.4-1.2)
no response	f	2	1	1
	%(CI)	0.1 (0.0-0.5)	0.1 (0.0-0.4)	0.1 (0.0-0.4)
Total	f	1641	1641	1641
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5. Familiar with calorie values of food

		Adolescent girls with BMI<18.5 kg/m ²	Adolescent girls with BMI 18.5-25 kg/m ²	Total
Always	f	14	204	253
	%(CI)	9.3 (5.2-15.2)	12.4 (10.9-14.1)	12.9 (11.5-14.5)
Very often	f	6	105	124
	%(CI)	4.0 (1.5-8.5)	6.4 (5.3-7.7)	6.3 (5.3-7.5)
Often	f	16	169	200
	%(CI)	10.7 (6.2-16.7)	10.3 (8.9-11.9)	10.2 (8.9-11.7)
Somtimes	f	22	278	335
	%(CI)	14.7 (9.4-21.4)	16.9 (15.2-18.9)	17.1 (15.5-18.9)
Rarely	f	29	373	435
	%(CI)	19.3 (13.3-26.6)	22.7 (20.7-24.9)	22.2 (20.4-24.2)
Never	f	62	502	594
	%(CI)	41.3 (33.4-49.7)	30.6 (28.4-32.9)	30.4 (28.3-32.5)
No resoinse	f	1	10	15
	%(CI)	0.7 (0.0-3.7)	0.6 (0.3-1.2)	0.8 (0.4-1.3)
Total	f	150	1641	1956

Almost 1/3 of surveyed students was always, very often, and often familiar with the calorie values of food, while more than 1/2 answered to this question as never or rarely. (Table 5)

DISCUSSION

According to the South Australian study⁽⁸⁾ more than 70% of girls believed they were obese, while the medical record showed that only 10% of them were overweight with respect to their age and height.

The study conducted in the Center for adolescents in Victoria in 1995 on a 600 teenagers sample found that more than 70% of girls wanted to be slimmer, even those with low body weight. About 60% of Australian women were on some kind of diet, and 13% of girls believed that smoking is a good way to weight loss.

Dr. Dianne Neumark-Sztainer⁽⁹⁾ estimated the prevalence of eating disorders and dieting on a sample of 6728 adolescents from 5 to 12th grades, and reported that almost half of girls (45%) were on a diet, compared to 20% of boys. Eating disorders were found in 13% of girls and 7% of boys.

CONCLUSION

You need to be a part of the curriculum to introduce teaching about nutrition as it tries to build healthy attitudes of youth toward proper nutrition. It is also necessary in schools as early as possible to discover people who have problems with diet and subjected them to an early treatment.

As part of informing the citizens via the media is necessary to draw attention to the symptoms of eating disorders and give advice to parents, teachers and others who work with young people so as to recognize the symptoms of eating disorders.

Apstrakt

Uvod: Poremećaji ishrane su češći kod žena, a posebno su pod rizikom adolescentkinje.

Cilj rada: procijeniti da li su adolescentkinje u Banja Luci (Republika Srpska-B&H) zadovoljne svojom postojećom tjelesnom masom i izgledom. I da se analiziraju njihovi stavovi o sopstvenom izgledu.

Metod rada: Anketnim istraživanjem su obuhvaćene adolescentkinje u dobi od 16 do 17 godine u svim srednjim školama u Banjoj Luci. U anketiranju smo koristili modifikovani anketni upitnik EAT-26. Od ukupno 2240 učenica I i II razreda srednjih škola 1956 (87.3%) je popunilo anketni upitnik.

Rezultati: Skoro 1/2 anketiranih učenica sa BMI < 18.5 kg/m² je izjavilo da su ponekad nezadovoljne svojim tjelesnim izgledom. Više od 1/2 (54.8%) anketiranih učenica sa BMI od 18.5-25 kg/m² je ponekad nezadovoljno svojim izgledom, dok 1 od 10 anketiranih je izjavila da često ima taj osjećaj. Skoro 1/5 je izjavila da često želi da je mršavija. Uz statistički značajnu razliku anketirane učenice sa BMI < 18 kg/m² su rekly da nikad nisu upoznale sa kalorijskim vrijednostima hrane u odnosu na učenice sa BMI od 18-25 kg/m². ($\chi^2=63.7$; $df=24$; $p=0.000$). Skoro 1/3 anketiranih učenica je uvijek, veoma često i često upoznata sa kalorijskim vrijednostima hrane.

Diskusija: Nezadovoljstvo tjelesnim izgledom može nositi različite zdravstvene rizike. Oni se kreću od pokušaja neadekvatne dijeta do nesposobnosti da se prepoza i zaustavi debljanje.

Zaključak: Istraživanje ukazuje na potrebu edukacije mladih u cilju prihvatanja zdravih stilova života.

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