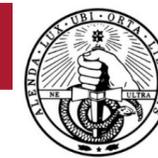




Gender Differences in Parental Influences on Disordered Eating in College Students



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Introduction

- The Tripartite Influence Model proposes that negative influences from parents lead to appearance-based social comparison and thin ideal internalization in their children.¹
- Social comparison and internalization leads to body dissatisfaction which is associated with subthreshold eating disorder symptoms called disordered eating (DE).¹
- College students are particularly at risk, with about 12% exhibiting DE at a level that places them at risk for developing an eating disorder.²
- Previous research suggests DE is highly prevalent among male and female college students and has found correlations with parental influence and DE in women.^{1,2}
- Parental influence on DE has not been studied in male college students.
- The goals of this study were to assess gender differences in parental influence on DE and compare relationships between parental influence and DE between men and women.

Method

- A nationally representative sample of undergraduate college students completed self-report measures on parental influence and eating-related outcomes.
- All participants were current students between the ages of 18-24 attending a 4-year college in the United States. Analyses were restricted to participants identifying as male or female.
- Men ($n = 129$); Women ($n = 359$); Mean age: 19.43 years; 75.1% White Non-Hispanic
- Measures:
 - Parental influence
 - Parental Influence Questionnaire (PIQ): Direct and Indirect
 - Eating-related outcomes
 - Eating Attitudes Test (EAT): EAT-26 and EAT behavioral questions (EAT-B)
 - Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance (SATAQ-4): Thin (SATAQ-T) and muscular (SATAQ-M) ideal internalization

Results

Correlations Between Parental Influence Measures and Eating-Related Outcomes

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. PIQ-D	1	-	-	-	-	-
2. PIQ-I	.43**	1	-	-	-	-
3. EAT-26	.37**	.22**	1	-	-	-
4. EAT-B	.27**	.17**	.42**	1	-	-
5. SATAQ-T	.27**	.29**	.46**	.28**	1	-
6. SATAQ-M	.09*	.09	.15**	.11**	.34**	1

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Correlations Between Parental Influence Measures and Eating-Related Outcomes in a Gender Divided Sample

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. PIQ-D	1	.36**	.25*	.11	.21*	.11
2. PIQ-I	.44**	1	.10	-.01	.19*	.16
3. EAT-26	.40**	.22**	1	.26**	.31**	.31**
4. EAT-B	.31**	.20**	.46**	1	.22*	.12
5. SATAQ-T	.28**	.27**	.50**	.30**	1	.53**
6. SATAQ-M	.10	.10	.13*	.12*	.36**	1

Notes: Correlations for women are below the diagonal. Correlations for men are above the diagonal. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Fisher Significance of the Difference Between Two Correlation Coefficients (EAT-B)

Measure	WOMEN		z	p	MEN	
	r	n			r	n
PIQ-D	.31	336	1.97	.049	.11	122
PIQ-I	.20	348	2.07	.039	-.02	126

Independent Samples t-test Comparing Women and Men

Measure	M(SD) Women	M(SD) Men	t(df)	p
PIQ-D	39.00(15.45)	37.79(11.81)	.41(454)	.69
PIQ-I	29.69(10.17)	26.07(8.95)	3.58(472)	< .001
EAT-26	10.67(10.48)	7.89(9.05)	2.30(486)	.07
EAT-B	.30(.46)	.22(.41)	1.82(486)	< .001
SATAQ-T	17.55(4.37)	14.99(4.30)	5.74(485)	< .001
SATAQ-M	15.65(5.08)	17.38(5.20)	-3.29(485)	.001

Discussion

- Parental influence is associated with DE in men and women, and the association is less strong for men than women.
- Results support the Tripartite Model of Influence, suggesting that parents are primary sociocultural influences affecting DE in their college-aged children.
- It is important to consider gender when studying risk factors for DE since men and women are affected differently. These gender differences are essential for developing successful prevention strategies.