Exploring Mediational Models between Body Dissatisfaction and Loss of Control Eating in Young Men

Lisa Guerricabeitia ♦ Derek Kosty, PhD ♦ Claire Guidinger, MA ♦ Gina Williamson ♦ Nichole R. Kelly, PhD
Prevention Science Institute
University of Oregon

Introduction

- Loss of control (LOC) eating, or the subjective experience of being unable to control what or how much is being eaten, is associated with the onset of eating disorders and obesity.
- Previous research has focused on the behavioral and emotional correlates of LOC eating primarily in women and children.
- Increasing evidence shows that these behaviors are also prevalent among young men.
- Body dissatisfaction is a common antecedent to LOC eating in both men and women.
- Theoretical models suggest that dietary restraint, emotion dysregulation, and exercise dependence symptoms (EDS) mediate or explain the association between body dissatisfaction and LOC eating in women and children; however, these models have not been evaluated in men.

Specific Aims

- To explore possible mediators between body dissatisfaction and LOC eating frequency among a sample of young men:
  - Dietary Restraint
  - Emotional Dysregulation
  - Exercise Dependence Symptoms

Methods

- Online Surveys
  - Demographics: Self-reported height and weight, income, education, and presence of a psychiatric diagnosis
  - LOC Eating & Dietary Restraint: Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (Fairburn & Beglin, 1994) LOC eating frequency in the last 28 days
  - Body Dissatisfaction: Revised Male Body Image Attitudes Scale (Ryan, Morrison, Reddy, & McCutcheon, 2011; Tylka, Bergeron, & Schwartz, 2005), including:
    1. Muscularity
    2. Fat concerns subscales
  - Emotion Dysregulation: Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (Gratz & Roemer, 2004) six domains of emotion dysregulation:
    1. Non-acceptance of emotional responses
    2. Difficulties engaging in goal-directed behavior
    3. Impulse control difficulties
    4. Lack of emotional awareness
    5. Limited access to emotion regulation strategies
    6. Lack of emotional clarity
  - EDS: Exercise Dependence Scale (Hausenblas & Symons Downs, 2002)

Analytic Approach

- Path analyses in Mplus tested indirect paths using joint significance tests and bias-corrected confidence bounds.

Results

- Sample: 1109 ethnically/racially diverse young men (18-30y; Mage=24.1±3.6y; M_Sex = 25.4 ± 6.2 kg/m²).
- Higher levels of masculinity concerns were linked to more emotional dysregulation and EDS, whereas fat concerns were directly linked to more emotion dysregulation, dietary restraint, and EDS (p<.01).
- The path from masculinity concerns to dietary constraint was not significant.
- More emotional dysregulation, dietary restraint, and EDS were directly linked to higher LOC eating frequency (ps<.01).
- Higher levels of masculinity concerns were indirectly linked to LOC eating frequency through greater emotional dysregulation, dietary restraint, and EDS (ps<.01; see Figure 1).

Discussion

- While body dissatisfaction is associated with LOC eating in young men, the pathways through which these phenomena are related may differ by the nature of the body concerns.
- Dieting, for instance, may be less relevant to disordered eating in men with masculinity concerns, and more relevant to men more concerned about their body fat.
- Future interventions may benefit from targeting specific body image concern subtypes.

Contact: Lisa Guerricabeitia ♦ ljjg@uoregon.edu

Figure 1: Mediation model and direct path coefficient estimates (parentheses are standardized coefficient for paths terminating at the continuous putative mediators and incidence rate ratios for paths terminating at the frequency of loss of control eating).