

Research paper on eating disorders are a widespread problem

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the growing concern of eating disorder in the United States. This is so because about 8 million in the United States experience the symptoms related to the eating disorders. The eating disorders have become a significant and persistent health concern in the United States. The paper employs sociological, psychological and economic approach to ascertain that eating disorders have powerful control over the individual in the society. Therefore, this social group will be powerful not only in terms of numbers, but based on special needs because social factors have a significant role in influencing eating habits of individuals.

Introduction

Eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa are characterized by a vital disturbance in the prevalence of eating behavior that is abnormal from traditional views of nutritional well-being. The national eating disorders association estimated that about 8 million in the United States experience the symptoms related to the eating disorder. Even if the eating disorders are more prevalent among women than men there are no significant differences between the social groups that are at risk for developing these disorders. This lack of a target social group is a concern for both individual and society given that eating disorders are among the tops ten causes of the disorder among women with anorexia nervosa. When comparing people with the eating disorders with those without, researchers found a number of deleterious and pervasive psychosocial trends such as strained interpersonal relationships. The individual suffering from the eating disorders tend to have

difficulty in regulating emotions, higher incidence of despondency and anxiety as well as decreases in occupational functioning. Therefore, this social group will be powerful not only in terms of numbers, but based on special needs.

Sociological Approach

Living in the western culture where the values of slim body women are presumed to play a significant role in the increased eating disorders worldwide. The rate of people with eating disorders in US continues to increase among women who have been exposed to western culture via temporary living. In western culture, new images of women associated with the beauty and attractiveness with conceptions of health and fitness. Since media emphasize the image of the ideal woman to be slender, young girls are becoming aware of the pressure to be slim. Dieting has become part of life in order to achieve the slim, feminine ideal associated with western society today.

In modernity, the media represents a main cultural structure which influences eating habits and what constitutes normal eating. Therefore, both cultural and social structures are external factors in society, which have a constraining power of the individual. In the western society such as the US, the media plays a role in spreading ideals figures via the glamorization of slenderness. For instance, in the early 1900s the ideal female body type in the US was a curvaceous and fuller figure. Likewise, advertisers who employ slim models to sell products emphasize the female body shape ideals. This has led to women seeing themselves as a cultural ideal and internalizing

modern conceptions of womanliness. Thus, women are becoming increasingly accustomed to changing their eating habits in order to attain the cultural ideal of slimness.

Similarly, the social structures like family and education play a significant role in establishing the eating habits of young people to avoid eating disorders. For instance, the social institution of the family can influence the normal eating with the prevalence of eating disorder such as anorexia, especially women from white middle class backgrounds. Even if anorexia can affect women, who do not fit in this social class the disorder is particularly common amongst this social group in the US. Therefore, being overweight is seen as an indicator of laziness and self-indulgence, which represents an individual's moral value (Scott, 2007).

The society views slenderness with moral perfection and assumes that individual who is thin has attained this idea via hard work, ambition, self-control and purity. This attitude to eating disorder and body shape indicate that being fat is an indicator of lacking self-control. Therefore, middle class women in the US have invested time, effort and hard work in order to mold their body to achieve the societal ideal of feminist portrayed in the media. This means individuals can infer the social attitudes towards obesity and slimness can dictate eating habits amongst the particular group. This indicates that the sociological approach to normal eating is expensive influence the individual's attitudes towards eating disorder.

Likewise, an individual suffering from the eating disorder is seen as someone who lacks influence in every part of his or her life. Thus, these young women feel powerless in their society and tend to use their eating disorder as a way

to exert power over one aspect of their lives. On the families of anorexics high expectations are placed on children by their parents via the development of eating disorder such as anorexia. Women from middle class search for activities that will enable them to achieve loss weight. This is so because a western woman believes that thinness equates beauty and achieving a slender figure via hard work is viewed as a personal achievement of the parents' expectations of anorexic appearance. The role of social class in growing concern of eating disorders indicate that the social structure has a great influence on normal eating. Therefore, normal eating can be seen from a sociological approach because the prevalence of eating disorder in social groups indicates social factors have a significant role in influencing eating habits (Scott, 2007). It is also useful in understanding why eating disorders appear in particular sections of society as opposed to others.

Psychological Approach

An eating disorder is becoming a significant and persistent health concern in the United States. The evidence indicates that eating disorders can result in addiction like eating patterns of hyperactive pleasant foods. The eating disorder is regarded as an option of personality disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder. This is so because eating disorders such as Binge eating disorder and anorexia nervosa are extremely comparable to other addictive behaviors (Rubin, 2006). An individual suffering from this disorder experiences large consumption for a long period, constant attempts to reduce and continued use despite severe consequences. However, tolerance,

withdrawal and decrease of social, occupational are less recurrent symptoms. Therefore, eating disorders can be construed to be addictive-like behaviors.

The scope of body dissatisfaction is believed to have influence of individual self-esteem. This is so because individuals examines their body figure by evaluating them against the ideal body required in the US culture. The outcome of this self-assessment establishes body satisfaction or dissatisfaction. For instance, a prospective study of college freshman women indicated that figure dissatisfaction, ineffectiveness and public shame were associated with symptoms of eating disorders. The body dissatisfaction could be an indicator of worsening of eating symptoms rather than an indicator of the growing of eating disorders (Ogden, 2010).

On the psychological approach, the eating disorder is seen as a survival mechanism where individuals have not established a method to express. Like any other disorder, individuals with eating disorders use restricted or purging behaviors as a method to cope with overwhelming emotions. Eating disordered individuals, most of them use their disorder to attain a partial sense of power over their apparently out of control lives. This is so because the individuals suffering from eating disorder tend to experience depression, low self-esteem, damaged self-worth and incapability of managing their emotions.

Therefore, there are two major psychological approaches of eating disorders such as psychodynamic and cognitive approach. The psychodynamic approach focuses on the role of patterns of interaction in the family while the cognitive approach focuses on the atypical methods in which sufferers of

eating disorders think about food. One of the defining features of eating disorder is a distorted body image where individuals tend to perceive themselves as being overweight when they are not. This cognitive approach suggests some kind of bias in the way that the visual information about the body is processed. In contrast, the psychodynamic approach claims that the origin of anorexia can be found in childhood, which depends on parenting styles (Russell and Jarvis, 2003). For instance, the effective parent is capable of correctly distinguishing between a child's biological and emotional needs while the ineffective parent does not respond to the child's needs, but imposes their own definitions of needs on their children.

Economical Approach

Eating disorder continues to be a significant issue in the United States. While eating mainly affects women, there is a growing concern about the increase in males affected with the illness. The eating disorder has a significant impact on the economy of the United States. This is so because these individuals receive community treatment, hospitalization may be required for severe cases. It has been estimated that 8 million Americans suffer from the eating disorders where one in 200 American women have anorexia. On the other hand, two to three in 100 American women experiences bulimia and about 15 percent of individuals suffering from anorexia or bulimia are men (Giordano, 2005).

The eating disorders tend to have the highest mortality rate compared to mental illness. The survey, conducted by the national association of anorexia nervosa recorded that 5-10 percent of anorexics die within 10 years after

contracting the disorder. The mortality rate related to anorexia is 12 times higher compared to the death rate of ALL causes of death of women between 15 and 24 years old. Likewise, about 20 percent of individual suffering from anorexia prematurely dies from complications associated with their eating disorders such as heart problems and suicide (Giordano, 2005).

Therefore, the eating disorder in Us has affected the economy in that its treatment range from \$500 to \$2000 per day. The average cost per month of inpatient is about \$30000. It is also approximated that individual with the eating disorder require about 3 to 6 months of inpatient care. The high cost of treating the eating disorder has made health insurance companies not to cover the cost. Similarly, the cost of treating outpatients such as therapy and medical monitoring is about \$100, 000. Therefore, from the economical point of view, the eating disorder is draining the nation's economy given the increased cost of living in the US.

The main factors for successful treatment often exist with the multidimensional team approach incorporating nurses, social workers, physicians and dieticians, which is proving to be costly. Education about nutrition and health is incorporated with psychotherapy, body image and self-esteem exercises as well as ongoing support. The goals of treatment include a resolution or reduction in maladaptive behaviors, which addresses the psychological and physiological issues and weight restoration for anorexia (Rubin, 2006). The cost of treatment is expensive because several thousand dollars can be used depending on the severity of the situation. Therefore, from an economical perspective, prevention focused on building a

strong sense of self is the only solution to the eating disorder among the powerful groups.

Conclusion

Eating disorder continues to be a critical issue in the United States. While eating affect women, there is a growing concern about the increase in males affected with the illness. This is so because the research indicates that about 15 percent of individuals with either anorexia or bulimia are men. However, the most powerful group that is severely affected by an eating disorder is the women who suffer from the anorexia. This is so because about 8 million Americans suffer from eating disorder where one in 200 American women have anorexia. From an economical perspective, the eating disorder is draining the nation's economy given the increased cost of living in the US.

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