

# Good literature review on gender differences in dieting

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# **Integrated Literature Review: Gender Differences in Dieting**

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### **Introduction**

Gender impacts eating behavior of individuals significantly, and the same has identified in various studies conducted on the subject. In contemporary society, good body shape and good health are desired by everyone, irrespective of their gender. However, the role of gender on health behavior is examined and proven by various experts. Women are more inclined towards dieting and eating healthy foods, whereas, men are more inclined towards tasty food even if food contains lots of fat (Wardle et al., 2004). This paper intends to conduct a literature review to identify the role of gender on dieting and eating habits of men and women.

Markey & Markey (2005) in their study describe the relationship between body image and eating behaviors. The study was conducted on 104 young men and 104 young women. The study revealed that BMI (body mass index) is negatively related with body satisfaction and positively with dieting. According to the study, gender does not much impact dieting behavior, and both men and women are conscious about their weight. However, weight management techniques could be different in cases of men and women (Markey & Markey, 2005).

Ostovich & Rozin (2004) analyzed the impact of lifestyle on eating habits of individuals. The author analyzed dieting attitude of 381 participants belongs to three generation i. e. children, parents, and grandparents. It was observed

that the women from all three generations are conscious about their body image, but tendency of dieting decreased as the age increases. In all three generations there was a difference in body image and dieting attitude among men and women (Ostovich & Rozin, 2004).

Rosin (2012) mentioned that dieting and selection of food items not only get impacted by the gender or body image but also by economic conditions. The author established a link between weight-loss dieting and economic conditions. Weight-loss dieting get impacted by the society. People who want to achieve the ideal body weight as per social norms go for dieting (Rosin, 2012). In another study Gillen et al. (2014) analyzed relationship between selection of dieting behavior, BMI and depression. The study conducted on 198 young men and women revealed that people with high BMI go for dieting, and women with depressive symptoms select more unhealthy dieting behavior (Gillen et al., 2012; Markey & Markey, 2005).

### **Dieting and Health:**

Willett (1994) in his article describes the importance of a healthy diet, and its impact on prevention of various health diseases. Healthy dieting emphasizes on eating fruits and vegetables on a regular basis, and minimizing intake of fat and oil. Healthy dieting does not mean that person has to remain hungry for a longer time. However, it emphasizes on taking healthy meals at regular interval. Meal rich in fiber, minerals, and vitamins reduce the exposure to heart and various other deceases (Willett, 1994).

Sofi et al. (2010) said that Mediterranean diet has various positive impacts on the health. The diet not only helps in reducing weight but also in fighting

with various health diseases such as neurodegenerative diseases, cancer and mortality. Dinkins & Lino (2002) mentioned that people can improve their diet by exchanging unhealthy food with nutritious food. The food fulfills basic requirements of the body and provides nutrients for good health. Unhealthy food items impact health in a negative way and attract lots of diseases. Therefore, it is essential that people, irrespective of their gender, adopt healthy eating behavior (Sofi et al., 2010; Dinkins & Lino, 2002).

### **Dangers of Extreme Dieting:**

Leonard et al. (2013) said that American diet consists of a variety of unhealthy food items. A large amount of oil, fat and refined carbohydrates increased the risk of various health diseases such as high blood pressure and other health diseases. Hardy & Tollefcbol (2010) mentioned that several food components have property to fight with cancer. The author suggested that the addition of bioactive dietary elements alter the epigenetic states. It shows that how diet impacts the health of a person (Hardy & Tollefsbol, 2010). A healthy diet refers to intake of all required elements such as protein, vitamins, calcium, iron, minerals etc. Diet rich in fruits and vegetables fulfill various nutrients requirements.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The analysis of existing literature on dieting, and impacts of gender on the dieting reveals that gender does impact selection of food items and tendency of the dieting. However, it was observed that modernization and changing lifestyle impacted the people attitude towards their body image and altered dieting pattern among both genders. Literature analysis also

informed about the risks associated with an unhealthy diet and benefits of healthy diet. It is important for people to lose weight by adopting a rich diet. The existing literature does not provide much information on how gender impacted dieting over a period. There is a need to conduct further research study to examine attitude of men and women toward dieting during old time and in present contemporary world. Future research study will explore the impact of modern lifestyle on dieting behavior and healthy eating habits of men and women.

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