



Eating disorder: Types and benefits of nutrition therapy for eating disorders

Moumita Barik¹, Rojina Swayamsiddha Sahu², Madhumita Sasmal^{3*}, Khan Sumaiya Sarfaraz Khan⁴, Gaurav Patel⁵

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Nutrition, Haldia Institute of Health Sciences, West Bengal, India

² M.Sc. Student, Department of Home Science, Berhampur University, Berhampur, Odisha, India

³ State Aided College Teacher, Mahishadal Raj College, Mahishadal, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal, India

⁴ Assistant Professor, Indian Institute of Food Science and Technology, Aurangabad, Maharashtra, India

⁵ M.Sc. in Food Technology, WCDDT, SHUATS, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

Eating disorders are serious conditions brought on by persistent eating habits that negatively impact your health, your emotions, and your ability to do necessary daily tasks. The three most common eating disorders are binge eating disorder, bulimia nervosa, and anorexia nervosa. This review paper will be summarized about eating disorder and its physical signs and symptoms and therapeutic diet.

Keywords: anorexia nervosa, diet, proper appetite, clean eating

Introduction

Eating disorders are significant conditions caused by persistent eating patterns that have an adverse effect on your health, your emotions, and your capacity to carry out essential life functions. Anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder are the three most prevalent eating disorders (Guerrini-Usubini *et al.*, 2023) [3].

The majority of eating disorders are characterised by an unhealthy obsession with food, body image, and weight. These actions can have a serious negative effect on your body's capacity to absorb the proper nutrients. Eating disorders can cause various ailments and affect the heart, gastrointestinal tract, bones, teeth, and mouth. Even though they can happen at other times, eating disorders frequently start in the teen and young adult years (Tewari, 2019) [12]. Through treatment, you can revert to healthier eating patterns and occasionally undo major side effects brought on by the eating disorder (Hoek, 1995) [4].

Different types of eating disorders

1. Orthorexia nervosa

An eating disorder called orthorexia nervosa involves an obsession with eating well.

A person with the illness could put so much emphasis on eating well that it interferes with other facets of their life. A neologism called orthorexia was created from the Greek words for "right" and "appetite." The phrase is slang for "proper appetite." On the other hand, the term orthorexia nervosa (ON) was coined to describe a potential new eating disorder whose main symptom is an unhealthy and obsessive emphasis on eating food seen as healthy (Jørgensen *et al.*, 2023) [5].

Despite the fact that orthorexia lacks official diagnostic criteria, it does have widespread indications and symptoms, such as.

- experiencing intense fear of "unhealthy" foods and avoiding those foods
- having an obsession or preoccupation with healthy foods, nutrition, and eating

- being unable to deviate from a specific eating style or dietary regimen without feeling extreme anxiety
- obsessively checking ingredient lists and nutrition labels
- cutting out large groups of food despite having no medical, religious, cultural, or ethical reason for doing so (e.g., gluten, sugar, all carbs, all fats, animal products)
- spending unusually large amounts of time planning, buying, and preparing meals they perceive as healthy, to the point that it interferes with other areas of life
- having an unusual interest in or excessively critical view of other people's eating habits
- spending an unusual amount of time reviewing menus or thinking about the foods served at events
- avoiding social events and foods prepared by other people
- bringing premade meals to events as a result of the belief that other people's food will not meet their standards of "healthy"
- experiencing unintentional malnutrition or weight loss as a result of severe food restrictions (Tewari *et al.*, 2022) [13].
- fixating on preventing or curing disease with food or "clean eating" (Polivy & Herman, 2002) [6].

2. Anorexia nervosa

An eating disorder is anorexia, also referred to as anorexia nervosa. Anorexics restrict their caloric intake and the kinds of food they consume. They eventually gain weight or are unable to maintain a healthy body weight for their height, age, stature, and physical condition. They could have an obsession with exercise, purge their meals by purposeful vomiting or abusing laxatives, or all three (Portingale *et al.*, 2023) [7].

Additionally, those who suffer from anorexia have a distorted perception of their bodies and a crippling fear of putting on weight. Anorexia is a serious illness that needs to be treated. Extreme weight loss in anorexics can cause

malnutrition, life-threatening health issues, and even death (Salvia *et al.*, 2023) ^[8].

Emotional and mental signs of anorexia

Emotional and mental signs of anorexia include:

- Extreme anxiety about putting on weight.
- Not being able to accurately judge your body's size and shape (having a distorted self-image).
- Having an obsessive interest in food, calories and dieting.
- Feeling overweight or “fat,” even if you're underweight.
- Fear of certain foods or food groups.
- Being very self-critical.
- Denying the seriousness of your low body weight and/or food restriction.
- Feeling a strong desire to be in control.
- Feeling irritable and/or depressed.
- Experiencing thoughts of self-harm or suicide (Söderqvist & Naessén, 2023) ^[9].

Physical signs and symptoms of anorexia

Low body weight for a person's height, sex, and stature is the most well-known physical indicator of anorexia. It's crucial to keep in mind, though, that anorexia is not necessarily accompanied by underweight. There are physical symptoms that are actually side effects of starvation and malnutrition in addition to weight-related indicators of anorexia (Batury *et al.*, 2023) ^[1].

Physical signs of anorexia include

- Significant weight loss over several weeks or months.
- Not maintaining an appropriate body weight based on your height, age, sex, stature and physical health.
- Unexplained change in growth curve or body mass index (BMI) in children and still growing adolescents.

Benefits of Nutrition Therapy for Eating Disorders

Registered dietitians address nutrient shortages in addition to educating and retraining people to improve their general health. Women who participate in eating disorder treatment programmes gain a variety of advantages as a result.

People rapidly become aware of increased digestion and nutrition absorption as a benefit. In actuality, a variety of bodily processes depend on intestinal health.

Because of this, individuals with eating problems frequently have sick guts, which result in numerous other abnormalities. The rest of their bodies start to feel better as soon as their stomachs start to mend (Ciwoniuk *et al.*, 2023) ^[2].

Since the gut houses the majority of the immune system, a healthy diet helps to strengthen it. Since the immune system protects the body from diseases and infections, it is crucial to maintain immune system health.

When it's unwell, the body is more prone to autoimmune diseases and the spread of existing illnesses (Moore & Bulik, 2007) ^[11].

A balanced diet also enables the body to normalise blood sugar levels. People are given additional energy as a result of nutrition therapy for eating disorders. Additionally, they have happier emotions and a better view on life (Steinhausen, 2009) ^[10].

Conclusion

An unhealthy concern with food, body image, and weight is a defining trait of the majority of eating disorders. These behaviours may seriously impair your body's ability to absorb the right nutrients. The heart, gastrointestinal system, bones, teeth, and mouth can all be harmed by eating disorders, along with other body systems. It concluded that, a balanced diet helps the body maintain normal blood sugar levels. Nutrition therapy for eating disorders results in increased energy in patients.

References

1. Batury VL, Tam FI, Hellerhoff I, Wronski ML, Borucki K, Weidner K *et al.* Hair-Based Assessment of Sex Steroid Hormones in Patients with Anorexia Nervosa. *Metabolites*,2023;13(1):21.
2. Ciwoniuk N, Wayda-Zalewska M, Kucharska K. Distorted Body Image and Mental Pain in Anorexia Nervosa. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*,2023;20(1):718.
3. Guerrini-Usubini A, Cattivelli R, Scarpa A, Musetti A, Varallo G, Franceschini C *et al.* The interplay between emotion dysregulation, psychological distress, emotional eating, and weight status: A path model. *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*,2023;23(1):100338.
4. Hoek HW. The distribution of eating disorders. *Eating disorders and obesity: A comprehensive handbook*, 1995, 207-211.
5. Jørgensen TSH, Osler M, Jørgensen MB, Jørgensen A. Mapping diagnostic trajectories from the first hospital diagnosis of a psychiatric disorder: a Danish nationwide cohort study using sequence analysis. *The Lancet Psychiatry*,2023;10(1):12-20.
6. Polivy J, Herman CP. Causes of eating disorders. *Annual review of psychology*,2002;53(1):187-213.
7. Portingale J, Eddy S, Fuller-Tyszkiewicz M, Liu S, Giles S, Krug I. Tonight, I'm disordered eating: The effects of food delivery app use, loneliness, and mood on daily body dissatisfaction and disordered eating urges. *Appetite*,2023;180:106310.
8. Salvia MG, Ritholz MD, Craigen KL, Quatromoni PA. Women's perceptions of weight stigma and experiences of weight-neutral treatment for binge eating disorder: A qualitative study. *eClinicalMedicine*,2023;56:101811.
9. Söderqvist G, Naessén S. Androgens impact on psychopathological variables according to CPRS, and EDI 2 scores: In women with bulimia nervosa, and eating disorder not otherwise specified. *The Journal of Steroid Biochemistry and Molecular Biology*,2023;226:106217.
10. Steinhausen HC. Outcome of eating disorders. *Child and adolescent psychiatric clinics of North America*,2009;18(1):225-242.
11. Striegel-Moore RH, Bulik CM. Risk factors for eating disorders. *American psychologist*,2007;62(3):181.
12. Tewari S. *Therapeutic diet to control diseases*, AkiNik Publications, 2019, 1-79. ISBN:978-93-5335-482-4.
13. Tewari S, Ray A, Nakhale S. *Probiotics and Gastrointestinal Health: Mechanism of Gastrointestinal Immunomodulation and Neuromodulation*, 2022.