

ABSTRACT

Prevalence of orthorectic and emotional eating behaviors among young people with varied physical activities and diet

Introduction. Recently, there has been a growing interest in physical activity and nutrition, as well as the pursuit of an ideal figure. This justifies the need to research the prevalence of eating disorders. People affected by them have incorrect beliefs about nutrition, especially about energy supply and weight gain. Consequently, great emphasis should be placed precisely on assessing the risk of eating disorders in different population groups, with a particular focus on young and health-intensive people. Especially since in recent years there has been an increasing incidence of atypical eating behaviors, such as orthorexia, or emotional eating. **Objective.** Because of this, the purpose of the present study was to assess the prevalence of orthorexic behavior and emotional eating among young people with varied physical activity and eating patterns. **Material and methods.** The study included students of health sciences (dietetics and physical education), as well as students of other sciences that are not related to health topics. The study used several psychometric tools (EMI-2, ORTO-15, DOS, TFEQ-13), and with the help of proprietary tools, the level of physical activity and diet in the study groups were assessed. The data were subjected to statistical analysis using Statistica 13.0 software, and a probability level of $p=0.05$ was adopted. **Results.** It was found that among the subjects, 44.5% scored below 40 on the ORTO-15, indicating an increased risk of orthorexia. This was more common in the group of health science students than in the group of other students (63.5% vs. 25.8%). The emerged group showing orthorexic tendencies correlated positively with such characteristics as low BMI values, high PAL, normal diet, and disturbed perception of size and caloricity of food ($p<0.05$). Based on the results of the TFEQ-13, 120 subjects (41.4%) had behaviors consistent with restricting food intake (health science students: 72.4%; other students: 11.0%), while 64 subjects (20.7%) were characterized by lack of control over food intake (health science students: 13.8%, 20 respondents; other students: 27.4%, 20 respondents). Emotional eating was characteristic of 106 students (37.9%), with the group of other students dominating (61.6%). The group showing tendencies toward emotional overeating correlated positively with such characteristics as high BMI values, low PAL, abnormal diet, and disturbed perception of the size and caloric content of food ($p<0.05$). An association was found between the prevalence of orthorexia and food restriction. In this group, 17.1% of men and 14.5% of women were found to have orthorexic tendencies, while 13.2% of men and 15.8% of women suffered from orthorexia ($p<0.05$). **Conclusions.** Orthorectic behavior is characteristic among

people who are associated with the theme of taking care of their health and exhibit health behaviors that are generally considered normal - practicing physical activity and exhibiting a healthy diet. Emotional eating is characteristic among people who are not associated with the topic of caring for health and exhibit health behaviors that are commonly considered abnormal - they do not engage in physical activity and exhibit an abnormal diet. People with orthorexic tendencies tend to judge the size and calorie portions of foods and dishes in photographs to be larger than they are. The opposite is true for people with emotional eating tendencies - here the size and caloric portion sizes of foods and dishes are underestimated. A correlation between orthorexic behavior and food restriction has also been observed. People who tend to restrict food are also more likely to exhibit orthorexic behavior. Similar relationships were not found about emotional eating.

Keywords: orthorexia; emotional eating; food restriction; young people; students; physical activity; diet.