

Abstract

The present study examines disordered eating attitudes and behaviors among adult female nurses in Hong Kong. The subjects, 484 female nurses between 19 and 55 completed questionnaire assessing body dissatisfaction, the Eating Disorder Inventory (EDI), and the Eating Symptoms Checklist-21 (ESC-21). Subjects were divided into two age groups with age 19 to 29 classified as the younger group (n=291) and age 30 or more as the mature group (n=193). Results shown that even though Chinese adult females from this sample were relatively slim compared to the Western females, still 51.5% of the subjects wanted to weigh less. A great majority of these adult females (92.1%) were very concerned about their weight and shape, 64.7% thought a slim body was very important, and 47.9% believed that their self-worth would be enhanced if they become slimmer. Also a great majority (50% to 80%) of these adult females dissatisfied with various body parts, with the younger adult females expressed more dissatisfaction. They also engaged in various weight loss behaviors but yet not practiced as much pathogenic compensatory weight loss behaviors as the Western females. The findings indicated that eating concerns and preoccupation with body weight and shape are very common among adult women. Moreover, with the extremely strong media effect in Hong Kong that intensified the emphasis on thinness in women, one would expect eating disorders will become increasingly prevalent among Chinese adult females in Hong Kong.