

Abstract

Mental habit and rumination are two process-oriented variables that have recently been introduced to the domain of body image. The present study examined the utility of negative body image thinking habit and rumination in predicting self-esteem and eating disturbances among Chinese adolescents. Participants included 376 adolescents, aged 12-25, who completed measures assessing negative body image thinking habit, body-image related rumination, body mass index, body dissatisfaction, self-esteem and eating disturbances. Results indicated that negative body image thinking habit and rumination did not predict self-esteem in male or female adolescents after body mass index and body dissatisfaction were controlled for. Both negative body image thinking habit and rumination, however, significantly and independently predicted eating disturbances over and above body mass index and body dissatisfaction for both male and female adolescents. These findings suggest that besides body dissatisfaction, both body-related mental habit and rumination are important mental processes variables that are related to eating disturbances. Future research should further examine these relatively new mental processes variables in understanding the development of eating disturbances.