

Title: Interpersonal and Affect-Regulation Difficulties in Disordered Eating: Do the Same Theoretical Models Apply to Men?

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Abstract: Although several studies suggest that negative affect and interpersonal difficulties are implicated in eating-related problems (e.g., Ambwani & Morey, 2013; Schmidt & Treasure, 2006), much of this research has been conducted among women and less is known about the roles of these factors for eating problems among men. Studies with undergraduate men suggest that difficulties in emotion regulation are associated with disordered eating (Whiteside et al., 2007) even after controlling for differences in BMI and negative affect (Lavender & Anderson, 2010). The present study sought to replicate these findings and extend them to assess any unique variance explained by interpersonal functioning among both men and women. Participants were men (n = 213) and women (n = 521) undergraduates at a large mid-Western university who completed self-report measures of eating psychopathology, interpersonal problems, emotion regulation problems, and negative affect. A series of multiple regression analyses measured whether or not difficulties in emotion regulation (DERS) and interpersonal problems (IIP-SC) contributed to disordered eating (EDE-Q) differently for men and women. Results indicate that DERS and IIP-SC scores significantly predicted EDE-Q global scores after controlling for variability in BMI and negative affect and that the results were similar for men and women. Present findings offer preliminary support for models that highlight emotional vulnerability and interpersonal problems for disordered eating among young adult men. Future research with clinical samples and studies employing multi-method assessment would further clarify the tenability of these theoretical models for men.

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