Body Image Impact on Quality of Life and Adolescents' Binge Eating: The Indirect Role of Body Image Coping Strategies

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Abstract : Purpose: The role of body image in adolescent binge eating is widely confirmed, albeit the various facets of this relationship are still mostly unexplored. Within the multidimensional body image framework, this study hypothesized the indirect effects of three body image coping strategies (positive rational acceptance, appearance fixing, avoidance) in the expected relationship between the perceived impact of body image on individuals' quality of life and binge eating symptoms. Methods: Participants were 715 adolescents aged 15-21 years (49.1% girls) recruited in Italian schools. An anonymous self-report online survey was administered. A multiple mediation model was tested. Results: A more positive perceived impact of body image on quality of life was a negative predictor of adolescents' binge eating, controlling for individual levels of body satisfaction. Three indirect effects were found in this relationship: on one hand, the positive body image impact reduced binge eating via increasing positive rational acceptance (M1), and via reducing avoidance (M2); on the contrary, the positive body image impact also enhanced binge eating via increasing appearance fixing (M3). Conclusions: The body image impact on quality of life can be alternatively protective—when adaptive coping is solicited, and maladaptive strategies are reduced—or a risk factor, which may increase binge eating by soliciting appearance fixing.

Keywords : binge eating, body image satisfaction, quality of life, coping strategies, adolescents

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