

## Investigating Ethnic Stereotypes and Perception of Anorexia Nervosa

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**Abstract :** Stereotypes surrounding anorexia nervosa are that the illness is commonly perceived as a self-inflicted disorder influenced by controlling parents, vanity, and cultural pressures. According to the authors' best knowledge minimal research has examined interactions with other factors, including gender and racial stereotypes involving this disorder. A common stereotype of this disease is that it mainly only affects Caucasian women and is very rarely seen in any other ethnicity. Previous literature has failed to investigate how visual body image and ethnic stereotypes affect the mental health of different ethnic groups, how various cultures impact the type of anorexia nervosa in the patient, and the different stereotypes associated with their eating disorder. Participants completed a pre-test questionnaire with vignettes, an image exposure portion, and a post-test questionnaire, which will all be evaluated and analyzed by ANOVA t-test and SPSS. Results showed that participants picked Caucasian females as more likely to have anorexia nervosa than those of Asian, Latin American, or African American descent subjects in both picture identification and vignettes. Future research should be conducted to further the results of this study by examining differences between gender stereotypes with anorexia nervosa as well as how sexuality has a role in perception.

**Keywords :** anorexia nervosa, ethnicity, stereotypes, eating disorders, perception

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