

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

A Study to assess the Knowledge and Attitude on Body Image among Students Studying in Selected College, Puducherry

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ABSTRACT

Background: Body image is related to how people think and feel about their own body. It relates to person's perception, feelings and thoughts, about his or her body and is usually conceptualized as incorporating body size estimation, evaluation of body attractiveness, and emotions associated with body shape and size.

Objectives

1. To assess the level of knowledge and attitude on body image among college students.
2. To correlate the level of knowledge and attitude.
3. To associate the level of knowledge and attitude on body image among college students with selected socio-personal variables.

Research methodology: A Quantitative non experimental research approach and cross sectional analytical research design was used for this study. Consecutive sampling technique was used to select 330 samples. Data collection was done using a self-administered questionnaire to assess the knowledge and 5 point Likert Scale to assess the attitude on body image among college students.

Results: The study findings revealed that out of 330 students majority 161 (48.8%) had poor knowledge, 144 (43.6%) of them had average knowledge and 25 (7.6%) of them had good knowledge. With regard to attitude, majority 233 (70.6%) had moderately favorable attitude, 95 (28.8%) of them had favorable attitude and 2 (0.6%) of them had unfavourable attitude. Mean score of college students on level of knowledge regarding body image was 5.60 with SD 2.080. The mean attitude score of college students regarding body image was 50.79 with SD 7.158. The study

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revealed that there was negative weak correlation between level of knowledge and attitude regarding body image among college students. There was statistically significant association between the level of knowledge of college students regarding body image with area of residence, religion and source of information.

Conclusion: Adolescence represent a critical stage in the development of positive or negative body image. The nurturing of a healthy body image is a challenge during adolescence. This study concluded that the majority of college students had poor knowledge and moderately favorable attitude on body image.

KEYWORDS

• Body image • Psychological wellbeing • Self-esteem • Depression • Eating disorders

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a sensitive period of life in which everyone faces physical and psychosocial changes. Adolescence represents a critical stage in the development of positive or negative body image. Rapid changes during adolescence in shape and weight due to puberty interact with socio cultural context in influencing body image. The nurturing of a healthy body image is a challenge during adolescence⁽¹⁾. Body image includes perceptual (e.g.: body shape estimation), cognition (thoughts and beliefs about the body), affective (feeling about once own body; e.g. body dissatisfaction), and behavioral components (e.g. body

checking)⁽²⁾. Body image perception is being shaped by unrealistic ideals portrayed in the media. Body dissatisfaction is one of the most consistent and robust risk factors for eating disorders, and low self-esteem, depression, and obesity⁽³⁾. Individuals with positive body image experience positive body interactions have greater self-confidence and psychological well-being. Negative body image is linked with more cosmetic use cosmetic procedure, maladaptive eating practices, eating disorder, poor self-esteem, anxiety, social alienation, depression and sexual inhibition. Researches show that female participants report higher dissatisfaction with their body image than male participants⁽⁴⁾.

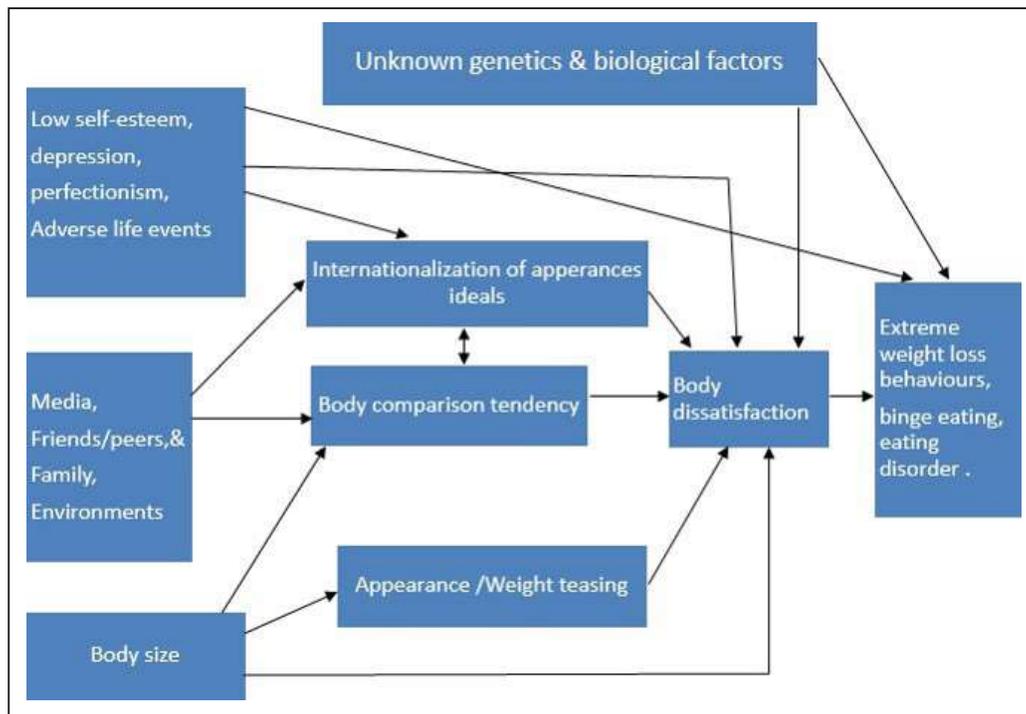


Figure 1: Biopsychological model of risk factors for development of body dissatisfaction by Susan J Paxton

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Globally there is an increasing focus on body image. Approximately 91% of women are unhappy with their bodies and report to dieting to achieve their ideal body shape. 58% of college-aged girls feel pressured to be a certain weight. In a survey, more than 40% women and about 20% of men agreed they would consider cosmetic surgery in the future. The statistics remain relatively constant across gender, age, marital status and race^(5,6). Pictures of movie stars and fashion model strongly impact on girls' body shape and image perception. Such mass media and diverse socio-cultural pressure are seen to cause an increased awareness of being thin as ideal, and to contribute to the misperception of body weight: how the body is viewed and evaluated by the individual and by others⁽⁷⁾. (15) 53% of adults reported feeling worse or much worse about their body Covid-19 lockdown and 58% of those under 18 reported the same. "Lockdown as made my body image worse because of spending my time on social media and just having time to sit in the front of the mirror for ages (girls, 15-17)". 85% of women and 79% of girls skip important activities due to body dissatisfaction. 70% of girls with a poor view of their bodies won't be a vocal about opinions⁽⁸⁾. A cross sectional study among adolescent girls in Tamil Nadu was conducted among 1200 samples on issues affecting body image. The results showed that 77.6% had of the girls had body image dissatisfaction. They concluded that body image dissatisfaction is no longer Western concept and affected Indian adolescent girls. It is a great extent. Hence effective interventions have to be planned to increase awareness on ideal body weight and protect our young generation from pressure of negative body image⁽⁹⁾. Expanded knowledge about healthy body image would help people change their ways of life and improve their preventive practices. It is the importance for the students to be educated about healthy eating, physical activity and weight status to encourage a healthy body image and life style⁽¹⁰⁾. There is a paucity of studies in India and gaps remain in our understanding regarding body image knowledge and development of attitudes and behaviour related to it. Hence the present study was aimed to assess the knowledge and attitude on body image among college students.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the level of knowledge and attitude on body image among college students.
2. To correlate the level of knowledge and attitude on body image among college students.
3. To associate the level of knowledge and attitude on body image among college students with selected socio-personal variables.

HYPOTHESES

H₁: There is a significant correlation between the level of knowledge and attitude on body image among college students.

H₂: There is a significant association between the level of knowledge and attitude on body image among college students with selected socio-personal variables.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The investigators obtained formal approval from Institutional Review Board and permission from the Principal, College of Nursing, Puducherry Technological University, Puducherry. Quantitative non experimental research approach was adopted. Cross sectional analytical research design was used for this study. The study was conducted in Puducherry Technological University. Socio-personal variables included were Age, Gender, BMI, Religion, Area of residence, Family income (monthly), Source of information, Dietary pattern and Major influence of body image. Study variable was knowledge and attitude on body image among students studying in selected college. College students both boys and girls >17 years who fulfilled the inclusion criteria were included in the study. Consecutive sampling technique was used to collect data from 330 samples. Data was collected over a period of one week. The data collected was kept confidential. Per day data was collected from 40 to 50 college students. Self-administered questionnaire to assess the level of knowledge on body image was used. A total of 11 questions was asked and it was interpreted as good, average and poor. 15 Attitude questionnaire was used to assess the level of Attitude on body image

with 7 positive statements and 8 negative statements. The total score was 75. It was interpreted as Favorable Attitude, Moderately favorable attitude and Unfavourable Attitude. The reliability of the tool was done using pilot study data. ($r = 0.8$). Frequency, Mean and SD was used to describe Socio Personal variables, level of knowledge and attitude on body image among college students. Spearman's Rank correlation coefficient was used to find out the level of correlation between Knowledge and Attitude on body image among college students. Chi square test/Fisher's Exact Test was used to find out the association between the level of Knowledge and Attitude on body image among college students with selected socio Socio-Personal variables.

RESULTS

The study findings revealed that out of 330 students majority 161 (48.8%) had poor knowledge, 144 (43.6%) of them had average knowledge and 25 (7.6%) of them had good knowledge. With regard to attitude, majority 233 (70.6%) had moderately favorable attitude, 95 (28.8%) of them had favorable attitude and 2 (0.6%) of them had unfavourable attitude. Mean score of college student's knowledge regarding body image was 5.60 with SD 2.08. The mean attitude score of college students regarding body image was 50.79 with SD 7.16. There was negative weak correlation between level of knowledge and attitude regarding body image among college students which is significant at $p < 0.05$.

DISCUSSION

According to distribution of socio-personal variables, 106 (32.1%) college students were in the age of 20 years, 191(57.9%) were males and 139 (42.1%) were females. Based on BMI 199 (60.3%) falls under normal range, 178 (53.9%) of their fathers were self-employed, 224 (67.9%) of their mothers were house wife. Majority of them 169 (51.2%) were Muslims .97(29.4%) of them are having family income of Rs. 15,001- 20,000. Majority 267 (80.9%) of them were from urban area, 164 (49.7%) of them have one sibling. 255 (77.3%) of students have positive perseverance of body image. 142 (43.0%) of them have got information about body image through mass media. Majority of the students 155 (47%) follow mixed diet

and 172 (52.1%) students felt that their weight affects the way they feel about themselves sometimes. According to the study there was statistically significant association between level of knowledge of college students regarding body image with area of residence, religion and source of information. No statistically significant association with other socio-personal variables like age, gender, BMI, religion, occupation of father, occupation of mother, family income, no. of siblings, perseverance of body image, major influence, type of diet and weight affects the way you feel about yourself. According to the study there was statistically significant association between level of attitude of college students regarding body image with age, BMI, source of information, major influence and weight affects the way you feel about yourself. No statistically significant association with other socio-personal variables like gender, religion, occupation of father, occupation of mother, family income, area of residence, number of siblings, perseverance of body image and type of diet.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Nurses play an important role in equipping the college students with adequate knowledge regarding body image.
- Topics regarding body image on adolescents can be included as a continuing education program for the nursing students.
- Nurse administrators can plan training sessions for the staff nurses about the negative consequences of body image.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were drawn on the basis of present study topic that assessed the knowledge and attitude regarding body image among selected college students in Puducherry. Adolescence is a sensitive period of life in which everyone faces physical and psychosocial changes. This study concluded that the majority of college students have poor knowledge and moderately favorable attitude on body image. Hence there is a need to educate students about body image as they are the pillars of future generation.

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