



## Eating Disorders Fact Sheet

Millions of Americans suffer from eating disorders, known as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, and eating disorders not otherwise specified (EDNOS). An estimated 90% + are adolescent and young women, though men and adults suffer from eating disorders as well. Eating disorders have serious mental and physical health consequences including death. In fact anorexia has the highest mortality rate of any mental illness -- up to 20%.

### **National Household Survey: Results are Unveiled Eating Disorders Often Untreated, Often Impair Lives**

WASHINGTON January 29, 2007 - The first nationally representative study of eating disorders in the United States appears in the February 2007 edition of *Biological Psychiatry*. The National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R) is a nationally representative survey of the U.S. population that was administered face-to-face to a sample of 9,282 English-speaking adults ages 18 and older between February 2001 and December 2003. Among the results:

- Lifetime prevalence of individual eating disorders is 0.6-4.5%.
- Lifetime prevalence of anorexia nervosa is .9% in women, .3% in men.
- Lifetime prevalence of bulimia nervosa is 1.5% in women, .5% in men.
- Lifetime prevalence of binge eating disorder is 3.5% in women, 2.0% in men.
- Eating disorders frequently impair the sufferer's home, work, personal, and social life.
- Binge eating is more common than anorexia or bulimia and is commonly associated with severe obesity.
- Eating disorders display substantial comorbidity with other mental health disorders.
- While eating disorders often coexist with other mental health disorders, eating disorders often go undiagnosed and untreated. A low number of sufferers obtain treatment for the eating disorder.
- Researchers found a surprisingly high rate of anorexia and bulimia among men, representing approximately one fourth of the cases of each disorder.

The EDC points out that survey included people 18 and older, which would exclude children and teens struggling with the disorder. Also, the survey authors note that they may have missed sufferers with severe anorexia, regardless of age. The EDC notes that the actual percentages of people with eating disorders may be higher than the study's findings.

James I. Hudson, Eva Hiripi, Jr., Harrison G. Pope, & Ronald C. Kessler. (2007). "The Prevalence and Correlates of Eating Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication," *Biological Psychiatry*, 348-358.

### **Other Facts about Eating Disorders**

- Doubled since 1960s
- Increasing in younger age groups, as young as 7 years
- Occurring increasingly in diverse ethnic and sociocultural groups
- 40-60% of high school girls diet
- 13% of high school girls purge
- 30-40% of junior high girls worry about weight
- 40% of 9-year-old girls have dieted
- 5-year-old girls are concerned about diet

*Source: Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*

## **Mortality**

Anorexia Nervosa has the highest mortality rate of any psychiatric disorder, as high as 20%. Death can occur after severe bingeing in bulimia nervosa as well.

## **Treatment Can Work**

With early detection and intervention

Treatment must be as complex as the illness including attention to the following

- Nutritional
- Medical
- Psychiatric
- Psychotherapy with patient, family

## **Rates of Recovery**

- 1/3 recover after initial episode
- 1/3 fluctuate with recovery and relapse
- 1/3 suffer chronic deterioration

If patients do not receive adequate treatment then multiple re-hospitalizations are common.

## **Health Consequences**

### **Anorexia Nervosa**

- Heart Muscle Shrinkage
- Slow and Irregular Heart Beats
- Heart Failure
- Amenorrhea
- Kidney Stones and Kidney Failure
- Lanugo (Development of Excessive Fine Body Hair on Face, Arms and Legs)
- Muscle Atrophy
- Delayed Gastric Emptying, Bowel Irritation
- Constipation
- Osteoporosis
- Death

### **Bulimia Nervosa**

- Electrolyte imbalance, heart arrhythmia, heart failure
- Teeth erosion and cavities
- Irritation and tears in the throat, esophagus and stomach
- Laxative dependence
- Emetic Toxicity
- Death