

Parents, Is It Your Fault? Effects of Familial Variables and Emotional Intelligence on Disordered Eating Habits and Attitudes

Why This Topic?

- Literature has always emphasized the importance that familial influences have on the development of eating disorders and has specifically lacked research on its influence on men.
- There is limited research on the role of emotional intelligence with regards to how familial factors influence the development of eating disorders.

Methodology

- Questionnaire
- Pearson's correlations, partial correlations, independent samples *t*-test

Results

The general correlations and the correlations between females and males are presented on the table.

| | Family Mealtime Frequency | | | Parental Weight Teasing and Criticism | | | Parental attitudes and habits towards dieting and weight | | | Emotional Intelligence | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|----------------------------------------------------------|---|---|------------------------|---|---|
| | GC | F | M | GC | F | M | GC | F | M | GC | F | M |
| Restrictive Eating Behaviors | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | X |
| Eating Concerns | X | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Shape Concerns | X | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |
| Weight Concerns | X | X | X | ✓ | ✓ | X | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | X |

GC = General Correlations
 F = Female
 M = Male
 ✓ = positive correlation
 ✓ = negative correlation
 X = no correlation

Correlations Adjusting for Body Mass Index and Emotional Intelligence

The correlational data was adjusted for Body Mass Index and emotional intelligence to look at their influence in the correlations among the variables and all correlations remained significant.

Gender Comparisons Between Variables

| Family Mealtime Frequency | Parental Weight Teasing and Criticism | Parental Habits and Attitudes Towards Dieting and Weight | Emotional Intelligence | Restrictive Eating Behaviors | Eating Concern | Shape Concern | Weight Concern |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| X | X | X | X | X | X | ✓ | ✓ |

✓ = Significant difference
 X = No significant difference

Conclusions

- Greater parental weight teasing and criticism and more unhealthy parental attitudes and habits towards dieting and weight increase disordered eating habits and attitudes.
- Greater family mealtime frequencies and higher emotional intelligence may serve as a protective factor in decreasing disordered eating habits and attitudes in individuals. However, emotional intelligence may not be as strong of a protective factor from the development of disordered eating behaviors and attitudes in men.
- Body Mass Index and emotional intelligence do not act as protective factors from familial influences for the development of disordered eating habits and attitudes in both females and males.
- Females are a lot more sensitive to familial factors in the development of disordered eating habits and attitudes, especially their concern for their shape and weight.

Takeaways

The findings of this study reiterate the importance familial influences have on the development of disordered eating habits and attitudes of individuals. It also expanded the literature in suggesting that familial factors have an influence in the development of disordered eating habits and attitudes in men. Additionally, females are more responsive to familial variables in the development of disordered eating habits and attitudes.