



36th Annual Conference of the European Health Psychology Society



www.2022.ehps.net

23 - 27 AUGUST 2022
BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA

Charting New Territories in Health Psychology

ABSTRACTS

14:30 - 14:45

Body appreciation in young adulthood: A new challenge in positive health psychology?

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Background: Being a young adult has many challenges in terms of body image, body appreciation, and expected body appearance. Several factors, such as familial role models, sporting habits, and personal well-being can greatly influence them, particularly in the case of young females; however, these connections remain unclear. Our purpose was to investigate the associations of body appreciation with disordered eating and psychological and familial factors.

Methods: We conducted our study among Hungarian female university students (N=261, mean age = 22.0 years; SD=2.2 years) using an online questionnaire package. Besides the Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2), we applied the Eating Attitude Test-26 (EAT-26), the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, and the Life Orientation Test (LOT-R), moreover, we asked questions regarding familial eating patterns, sporting, and body mass index (BMI).

Findings: Results of multiple linear regression showed that body appreciation was associated with all variables except with bulimia and obesity in the family. The strongest connection was found with self-esteem ($\beta=0.06$, $p<0.001$), dieting ($\beta=0.07$, $p<0.001$), sporting ($\beta=0.73$, $p<0.01$) and BMI ($\beta=0.10$, $p<0.01$). Surprisingly, eating disorders ($\beta=1.37$, $p<0.05$) in the family were in a positive relationship with body appreciation, while optimism ($\beta=0.09$, $p<0.05$) was a predictor of higher body appreciation.

Discussion: Our data support the literature, that is appropriate level of self-esteem, regular exercise, and controlling food intake can contribute to healthy body appreciation. On the other hand, constant dieting and higher BMI scores predict body dissatisfaction among young females. As expected, family plays a critical role in shaping the body appreciation of the youth.