

Relationship Between Disordered Eating Risk & Body Image Dissatisfaction of Spirit Squad Members

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Objectives: The aim of this pilot study was to determine if disordered eating habits and body dissatisfaction are prevalent among cheerleaders and dancers. Additionally, this study sought to determine the relationship between body image and disordered eating in this population.

Design: Twenty-three female cheerleaders and dancers completed this study. The participants completed an online Qualtrics survey that contained personal demographic questions, a validated body image questionnaire (BIQ), and validated disordered eating questionnaire (FAST).

Results: There was no statistically significant relationship between BMI and body dissatisfaction or disordered eating. A total of 60% of participants were found to be at risk for disordered eating and eating disorders. Participants were found to be at moderate risk for body image dissatisfaction with an average BIQ score of 2.1. Body dissatisfaction had a positive linear relationship with disordered eating ($r=0.5$).

Conclusions: This is one of the first studies demonstrating the association between body dissatisfaction and eating disorder risk within the population of collegiate cheerleaders and dancers. Future research should examine the clinical implications for nutrition education interventions promoting body positivity and disordered eating prevention and/or recovery.

There was no external funding and authors have no conflicts of interest in this study.