

Prevalence of Symptoms of Body Dysmorphic Disorder and Its Correlates: A Cross-Cultural Comparison

ANTJE BOHNE, M.S., NANCY J. KEUTHEN, PH.D.
SABINE WILHELM, PH.D., THILO DECKERSBACH, PH.D.
MICHAEL A. JENIKE, M.D.

The authors investigated the prevalence of body image concerns, body dysmorphic disorder, and related psychiatric symptoms in a group of 101 American students. Results were compared with data from a group of 133 German students. Survey data were collected on body image concerns, self-esteem, depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive symptoms, and skin picking. A total of 74.3% of the American students endorsed body image concerns, and 28.7% were preoccupied by them; 4.0% appeared to meet DSM-IV criteria for body dysmorphic disorder. Body esteem was significantly correlated with self-esteem and depressive, anxiety, and obsessive-compulsive symptoms. Body image concerns and preoccupation were significantly greater in American than in German students, although the prevalence of probable body dysmorphic disorder was not.

(Psychosomatics 2002; 43:486–490)

Physical attractiveness has been valued over time and across different cultures,^{1,2} with some evidence that physically attractive people are likely to benefit from physical attractiveness stereotyping.^{3,4} Although the perception of beauty is subjective, common culture-specific notions of physical attractiveness do exist.⁵ Across cultures, however, notable differences have been reported in the concept of physical attractiveness^{6,7} and in the importance placed on it. Americans, for example, rely more on appearance and attractiveness in their perception of human differences than do their Japanese and Chinese counterparts.⁸ In addition, Americans have been found to place greater value on physical attractiveness in a potential mate than do Germans.⁹

When physical attractiveness affects the value attributed to an individual, the importance of an aesthetically

pleasing appearance increases and body image concerns become more likely. Hence, one may expect that the cultures that place greater value on physical attractiveness (e.g., American) have a higher rate of people experiencing body image concerns. Indeed, Americans are more likely to be concerned about their appearance than Germans.¹⁰ In a recent study,¹¹ 19% of men and 25% of women in an American population sample reported marked concerns about their physical appearance.¹¹

Dissatisfaction with one's appearance can commonly occur; however, it generally fails to significantly affect one's life. Alternatively, body image concerns can be excessive and quite devastating. The diagnosis of body dysmorphic disorder is satisfied when 1) an individual is excessively concerned with an imagined or slight defect in appearance, 2) the concern results in significant distress or functional impairment, and 3) the concern is not better accounted for by another mental disorder (e.g., an eating disorder) (DSM-IV). To date, the prevalence of body dysmorphic disorder has not been examined across cultures. An overview of prevalence rates for various cultures¹² re-

Received Dec. 27, 2001; revision received May 30, 2002; accepted June 11, 2002. From Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston. Address reprint requests to Dr. Keuthen, OCD Clinic, Massachusetts General Hospital—East, 149 13th St., Charlestown, MA 02129; keuthen@psych.mgh.harvard.edu (e-mail).
Copyright © 2002 The Academy of Psychosomatic Medicine.

veals differences; however, it is unclear whether these reflect differences in the body dysmorphic disorder criteria used or are actual cultural differences in prevalence rates.

The current study aimed to investigate the prevalence of symptoms of body dysmorphic disorder in a nonclinical sample of American students and to compare these data cross-culturally with a previously described German student population.¹³ We hypothesized that body image concerns are more frequent in American than German students, given that Americans have been reported to place greater value on physical attractiveness.⁹ On the basis of previous reports that body image concerns and body dysmorphic disorder often accompany additional psychological problems,¹⁴⁻¹⁶ we additionally investigated self-esteem and symptoms of depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and self-injurious skin picking. We hypothesized that students with low body esteem would also report low general self-esteem as well as more depressive, anxiety, and obsessive-compulsive symptoms.

METHOD

Data from 111 American college students¹⁷ were collected by using a questionnaire survey and several self-report scales. Informed consent was obtained and course credit awarded for study completion. Ten American students were excluded from the final data analyses because of incomplete survey completion. Of the remaining 101 American participants, 83 (82.2%) were female. Ages ranged from 17 to 29 years (mean = 21.0, SD = 2.4), with an average of 14.8 years of education (SD = 1.2). Data were compared with those of 133 German students,¹³ of whom 98 (73.7%) were female, with an age range of 19 to 37 years (mean = 22.0, SD = 3.5). The average number of years of education in the German sample was 13.9 (SD = 0.9).

Study participants in both groups were asked to fill out self-report questionnaires. German students filled out German translations of the inventories. The Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire,¹⁸ a self-report screening instrument for body dysmorphic disorder based on the criteria outlined in DSM-IV, was used to assess body image concerns. The English form of the Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire is highly correlated with clinicians' diagnoses of body dysmorphic disorder. It has a reported sensitivity of 100% and a specificity of 89% among individuals with a psychiatric diagnosis.¹⁹ To our knowledge, no psychometric data are available for the German version of the Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire.

Our assessment package also included the Beck Depression Inventory,²⁰ which is a reliable research instrument with satisfactory validity.²¹⁻²³ Beck Depression Inventory scores indicate the number and severity of self-reported depressive symptoms. The English form of the Beck Anxiety Inventory,²⁴ which was also included, is also a reliable and valid research instrument.^{24,25} No psychometric data were available for the German translation. Beck Anxiety Inventory scores indicate the number and severity of endorsed somatic anxiety symptoms. Additionally, the Maudsley Obsessive-Compulsive Inventory²⁶ was included. The English version provides satisfactory coefficients for reliability and validity.²⁶ No psychometric data are available for the German translation, which has apparent face validity. Maudsley Obsessive-Compulsive Inventory scores represent the number of endorsed obsessive-compulsive symptoms. The Self-Esteem Scale,²⁷ which has sufficient reliability and validity coefficients, was also included.^{28,29} Higher Self-Esteem Scale scores correspond to higher levels of self-esteem. The Skin-Picking Inventory (N.J. Keuthen *et al.*, unpublished) was included to assess the occurrence of self-injurious skin picking. The Skin-Picking Inventory is described in more detail elsewhere.¹³ To date, no psychometric data are available for this inventory.

Data were analyzed by using one-tailed Mann-Whitney U tests, Spearman's correlations, and Cohen's tests for differences between proportions³⁰ and two-tailed t tests for independent means. A p value of 0.05 was used to determine statistical significance.

RESULTS

American Students

Data from the Body Dysmorphic Disorder Questionnaire indicated that 75 American participants (74.3%) were very concerned with the appearance of parts of their body. Twenty-nine (28.7%) endorsed preoccupation with these concerns. In 36 American students (35.6%), the main concern was becoming too fat or not being thin enough. Six (5.9%) reported significant social interference, one (1.0%) reported significant academic or occupational interference, and seven (6.9%) reported some avoidance secondary to their body image concerns. Six (5.9%) American students estimated spending 1 to 3 hours on average per day and one (1.0%) more than 3 hours per day thinking about their perceived defect in physical appearance. Four Americans (4.0%) (50% female) appeared to meet DSM-IV criteria

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات