

The Relationship Between Weight Self-Stigma and Quality of Life Among Youth in the Jazan Region, Saudi Arabia

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Background

Studies on the role of weight self-stigma on the quality of life of young adults are limited.

Objective

This study aimed to examine the relationship between different forms of weight self-stigma (self devaluation and fear of enacted stigma) and the quality of life among Saudi youth in the Jazan region.

Method

A cross-sectional study was performed using a sample of 399 participants who were invited through social media platforms. We used Arabic, validated versions of the weight self-stigma questionnaire (WSSQ) and the World Health Organization quality of life questionnaire. Data analysis was performed by independent samples t-test and analysis of variance with Tukey's post hoc test.

Result

The study sample consisted of 399 participants aged 21.12 years \pm 2.91 years. A total of 264 (66.2%) were female. The overall weight self-stigma score of the study population was 34.81 \pm 10.73 on the WSSQ. The analysis showed a significant association between weight self-stigma and quality of life and body mass index (BMI; $p < 0.01$). In addition, participants who were overweight and obese had more self-devaluation and fear of enacted stigma than did participants with normal weight. Participants with high weight self-stigma had lower quality of life than did those with less weight self-stigma.

Table 2: The weight self-stigma questionnaire.

Items	Responses*					
	Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
WSS-total score, <i>M (SD)</i>	34.81 (10.73)					
Self-devaluation	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
I will always go back to being overweight	174	43.6	111	27.8	114	28.6
I caused my weight problems	100	25.1	91	22.8	208	52.1
I feel guilty because of my weight problems	148	37.1	84	21.1	167	41.9
I became overweight because I am a weak person	181	45.4	87	21.8	131	32.8
I would never have any problems with weight if I was stronger	96	24.1	73	18.3	230	57.6
I do not have enough self-control to maintain a healthy weight	130	32.6	100	25.1	169	42.4
Fear of enacted stigma						
People discriminate against me because I have had weight problems	238	59.6	81	20.3	80	20.1
It is difficult for people who have not had weight problems to relate to me	137	34.3	98	24.6	164	41.1
Others will think I lack self-control because of my weight problems	169	42.4	100	25.1	130	32.6
People think that I am to blame for my weight problems	163	40.9	84	21.1	152	38.1
Others are ashamed to be around me because of my weight	268	67.2	65	16.3	66	16.5
I feel insecure about others' opinions of me	192	48.1	79	19.8	128	32.1

Abbreviations: WSS, weight self-stigma.
*Responses to the weight self-stigma questionnaire were recoded and summarized into positive (agree and completely agree), neutral, and negative (disagree and completely disagree) responses.

Table 4: Correlation between weight self-stigma and quality of life.

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Weight self-stigma
Quality of life	Physical domain	64.46	18.82	-.27**
	Psychological domain	82.21	19.90	-.34**
	Social domain	84.37	27.06	-.20**
	Environmental	84.07	19.03	-.31**

Abbreviations: M, mean; SD, standard deviation; r, Pearson correlation coefficient.
** $p < 0.01$

Conclusion

The results of this study show that weight self-stigma is negatively correlated with the individual's quality of life. Weight self-stigma was positively associated with BMI.

References

