

DISORDERED EATING AND COMPULSIVE EXERCISE BEHAVIORS: ASSOCIATIONS WITH QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG ADOLESCENT ATHLETES

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Purpose

- The prevalence of disordered eating (DE) and compulsive exercise (CE) behaviors is higher among adolescent athletes compared to their non-athlete peers.^{1,2}
- DE behaviors are related to lower quality of life (QoL) in adolescents,³ but the association between eating and exercise psychopathology with QoL is not well understood in adolescent athletes.
- The **primary aim** was to examine the association between DE and CE behaviors with QoL measures among uninjured adolescent athletes.

Methods

- Cross-sectional study of uninjured adolescent athletes who completed the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (EDE-Q), Compulsive Exercise Test (CET) and Pediatric QoL Inventory (PedsQL).
- Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to assess the relationship of PedsQL scores with EDE-Q and CET scores (global and subscales).

Results

- 24 athletes (mean age=15.5±1.4 years, 79% female) participated in the study.
- Adolescent athletes with more severe DE reported poorer QoL (Figure 1a).
- Participants with less exercise rigidity and more lack of exercise enjoyment reported lower QoL (Figure 1b and 1c). Global CET scores ($r=0.00$, $p=0.99$), as well as subscales for avoidance of negative affect ($r=-0.22$, $p=0.31$), weight control ($r=-0.02$, $p=0.91$) and mood improvement ($r=0.30$, $p=0.15$), were not significantly related to QoL.

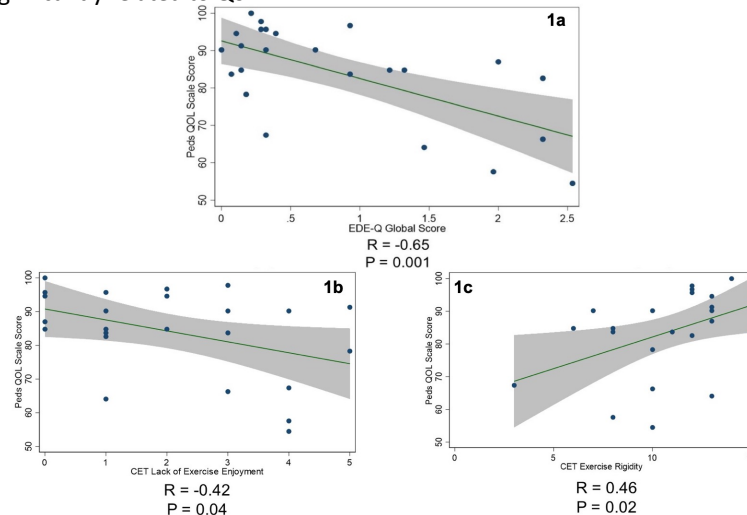


Figure 1. Scatterplot, line of best fit, and 95% confidence interval describing the relationship between 1a) EDE-Q and Peds QL scores; 1b) CET subscale/Lack of Exercise Enjoyment and PedsQL scores; 1c) CET subscale/Exercise Rigidity and PedsQL scores.

Conclusion

- Our data demonstrate a significant relationship between DE behaviors and QoL in adolescent athletes.
- The relationship between CE and QoL remains unclear but can be further elucidated with a larger sample size.
- Enhanced understanding of the associations between eating and exercise psychopathology with QoL in adolescent athletes is critical to promote the health and well-being of this vulnerable population.

References

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