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Original Research

Body Image, Anthropometric Measures, and Eating-Disorder Prevalence in Auxiliary Unit Members

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Abstract

Context: Medical professionals have recognized eating disorders and related problems in competitive athletes. Auxiliary members (color guard, dance, majorettes) experience the same appearance-related pressures observed in sports commonly associated with eating disorders.

Objective: To estimate eating-disorder prevalence based on associated eating-disorder characteristics and behaviors in female auxiliary members and to compare perceived and ideal body images and anthropometric measurements between at-risk and not-at-risk participants for eating-disorder characteristics and behaviors.

Design: Cross-sectional design.

Setting: Three universities in the southeastern United States.

Patients or Other Participants: Participants (n = 101, mean age = 19.2 ± 1.2 years) represented 3 auxiliary units, including color guard (n = 35), dance line (n = 47), and majorettes (n = 19).

Main Outcome Measure(s): Participants self-reported menstrual history, height, and weight. Anthropometric measurements included height, weight, body fat percentage, and waist and hip circumferences. We screened for eating-disorder risk behavior with the Eating Attitudes Test (EAT)-26 and for body dissatisfaction with the Figural Stimuli Survey.

Results: Based on the EAT-26, we estimated eating-disorder prevalence among members to measure 29.7% (95% confidence interval = 20.8%, 38.6%). The EAT-26 results revealed that 21% of participants used purgatives and 14% vomited to

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control weight or shape. The at-risk group had higher scores on the EAT-26 total ($P \leq .01$) and on the dieting ($P \leq .01$), oral control ($P = .02$), and bulimia ($P = .01$) subscales. Hip circumference ($P = .01$), self-reported weight ($P = .03$), measured weight ($P = .04$), difference between measured and preferred weights ($P = .02$), and calculated target weight ($P = .02$) were different between the at-risk and not-at-risk groups.

Conclusions: Collegiate auxiliary unit members may have an unacceptable prevalence of eating disorders. Our results validate concerns that auxiliary members may exhibit an unacceptable eating-disorder risk, highlighting the need to examine and address unhealthy weight-management behaviors independent of eating-disorder status.

Keywords: [EAT-26](#), [body image](#), [athletes](#), [dancers](#)

Toni M. Torres-McGehee, PhD, ATC; James M. Green, PhD; James D. Leeper, PhD; Deidre Leaver-Dunn, PhD, ATC; Mark Richardson, PhD; and Phillip A. Bishop, EdD, contributed to conception and design; acquisition and analysis and interpretation of the data; and drafting, critical revision, and final approval of the article.

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