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Research article

## Eating Attitudes, Perfectionism and Body-esteem of Elite Male Judoists and Cyclists

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### ABSTRACT






This study tested the hypothesis that male athletes who feel pressured to maintain a specific body weight present an elevated risk of subclinical eating disorders. Twelve judoists (19.5 ± 0.5 yr), fifteen cyclists (21.2 ± 2.8 yr) and seventeen non-competitive students matched for BMI and used as controls (21.8 ± 1.8 yr) were studied using the Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26). The Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, the Body Esteem Scale and the Profile of Mood States were also used to evaluate the relationships between eating disorders and psychological characteristics. Athletes completed the tests during their competitive period and controls completed the same scales at the same time. Scores obtained on EAT-26 differed significantly from the control group on EAT (p < 0.01), Dieting (p < 0.01), and Bulimia scores (p < 0.05). Sixty percent of the athletes used weight loss methods. Self-induced vomiting, use of laxatives and diet pills were reported by 4%, 10%, and 8.5% of them, respectively. Increasing exercise was the primary method used by controls to lose body weight. Athletes reported greater negative feelings about their physical appearance and their Body Weight Satisfaction than controls (p < 0.01, p < 0.05, respectively). Our results also showed that depression mood accounted for 73% of the variance in Bulimia scores and for 64% of the variance in Global EAT scores in athletes. Body-esteem Appearance and depression accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in Dieting scores. There was no difference in perfectionism and mood between athletes and controls. This study highlights that these athletes may tread a fine line between optimal competitive attitudes and detrimental health behaviors.

**Key words:** Eating behavior, male athletes, perfectionism, body esteem, mood

### Key Points

- Prevalence of eating disorders has become a growing concern among athletic populations, but very little information is available concerning male athletes.
- This study highlights that these athletes may tread a fine line between optimal

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