THE CONNECTION BETWEEN BINGE EATING AND
OTHER PSYCHOLOGICAL COVARIATES IN HEALTH CARE

UTILIZATION

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Abstract

The purpose of this project was to look into the different factors that are used in moderating service utilization in college students, including the potential risk factors involved in binge eating disorder. The moderators of the candidates included obesity, binge eating, ethnicity, gender, psychological comorbidity, emotional dysregulation and body image. Data coming from the Capable Minds Study (CMS) 2012 were used. Two participant samples were also analyzed: the complete CMS 2012 national undergraduate college students sample, and an undergraduate students sample from the AA University who joined in the CMS. The results depicted that psychological comorbidity influenced the utilization of psychological services significantly among CMS respondents with binge eating disorder (BED). Heightened emotional dysregulation, as well as depression have significantly influenced the risk for Binge Eating among the AA University respondents. These findings implied that BED need to be targeted and treated early, since early interventions can prevent progression to severe forms of psychopathology.

Introduction

Statement of Purpose

Overweight rates and obesity have been rising steadily during the last two decades. In fact, during the period between the years 1991 and 1998, the prevalence involving obesity has increased continuously from 18% to 19%. This condition is associated with several negative consequences in health, behavioral changes, as well as severe psychopathology (Daniel, Brewer, & Kilson, 2000; Kurt, Sugar, & Cooper, 1996). One very important behavioral aspect that contributes to the elevation of obesity levels includes binge eating. Disturbed patterns in eating, such as binge eating, are also linked to different physical and mental health issues (Barney, Grill, & Mash, 2004). However, it has been found that only less than half of the people dealing with BED have sought professional treatment for their case. Studies also suggest that generally speaking, college students may also be underutilizing different services. Among all college students dealing with distress levels, about three fourths have never requested treatment for these issues (Rose & Wills, 2010). The primary purpose for this project is to examine the different factors moderating medical and psychological service utilization among these college students.
Literature Review

Obesity

Several previous studies conducted have pointed to the issue of obesity as ‘epidemic’ (Maugher et al., 2001). Among Americans who are aged 20 and up, more than 140 million have been identified as overweight, and more than 70 million fall under the category of being obese, that is, with a BMI that is higher or equal to 30 kg/m². Even though these actual rates may vary depending on individual factors such as ethnicity and gender, the standard trend is that overweight prevalence and obesity has continued to increase.

Haley and Peterson (2000) suggested that the increase in obesity rates may be somewhat attributed to certain factors in the environment. Particularly, environmental agents are often thought to further promote higher energy intake, with low energy output through food availability, increased portion sizes, technological advances, high fat diets, and several other factors. There are also other individual factors that play a vital role in this regard, including socioeconomic status. Individuals who are under the lower socioeconomic groups have the tendency to have greater BMI’s compared to those who are under the higher socioeconomic groups.

Binge Eating Disorder

One very important behavioral component that contributed to an increase in the levels of obesity is binge eating. It has been reported by studies that among individuals who are looking for weight loss treatment, about 15% to 30% of both genders report succumbing to certain forms of binge eating. A provisional disorder has emerged further in order to capture what is referred to currently as binge eating disorder. It has been described as recurring episodes of binge eating in a particular period of time, while experiencing lack of eating control during these particular episodes. Binge eating is usually associated with eating more rapidly than the normal pace, eating until uncomfortably full, eating huge portions of food even when not hungry, or eating alone because of the feeling of embarrassment because of eating style. It is also associated with the feeling of disgust with self for eating too much. This behavior usually occurs at least two times a week for a period of six months, with a marked distress that is experienced as a response to these episodes.
Contributing Factors

Binge eating is found to be more prevalent compared to other disorders such as bulimia nervosa and anorexia nervosa. It has been found that binge eating is more prevalent among men. Binge eating is oftentimes associated with negative emotional impact such as anger in men, or diet failures among women. On top of that, men generally have the history of substance abuse before their binge eating patterns, while women also report binge eating as one of their coping mechanisms.

Several factors in the environment play a huge role in determining patterns involved in binge eating, especially among women. Socioeconomic and marital statuses are strongly associated with this issue among women compared to women. This means that married women have the tendency to eat more compared to non-married women. Age also plays a huge role in the pattern of binge eating for both genders. This is because for both groups, older ones are less likely to indulge in binge eating as compared to their younger counterparts.

Conclusions

According to the investigation findings, it may be concluded that the CMS undergraduates as well as the AA undergraduates have similarities in different respects, regarding certain variables such as binge drinking, age, obesity, smoking, as well as BED diagnosis. Regarding the factors that can impact the relationship between service utilization and Binge Eating Disorder, increased emotional, and not just behavioral dysregulation, have appeared to increase the risk.

References

