

## Body Image Dissatisfaction and Eating Disorders Amongst Tunisian Students

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### INTRODUCTION :

Body image disturbance and eating disorders among the young population are increasing.

### OBJECTIVES :

The aim of our study was to investigate the perception of body image and its relationship with eating disorders among tunisian medical students.

### METHODS :

A total of 100 Tunisian medical students were interviewed using :

- a self-administered questionnaire which explores clinical data,
- a scale of screening of eating disorders : Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26).
- the Stunkard's figure rating scale (FRS) which consists of 9 silhouette figures. The difference between ideal body and perceived body can be interpreted as a measure of body image satisfaction.

### RESULTS :

The mean age of the sample was 24.12 years, 71% were female and 29% male.

The average body mass index (BMI) was 22.72 kg/m<sup>2</sup>.

Students have normal weight (BMI 18.5–24.9) in 62 % of cases.

Sixty six percent of students who were "normal weight" were not satisfied of their body image and thirty eight percent of them showed a desire for thinness.

Seventy-three of students had a body image dissatisfaction. A BMI outside normal parameters influenced significantly the perception of body image ( $p=0.048$ ).

Nineteen percent of students had eating disorders. These students had an abnormal BMI ( $p=0.047$ ) and a body image dissatisfaction ( $p=0.018$ ).

### CONCLUSION :

Our study shows that the physical aspect of the students has a significant effect on their feeding behavior, it is thus essential to sensitize their circle of acquaintances to favor a healthy perception of body image.