



Associations of broad eating disorder symptoms with later alcohol problems in Finnish adult twins: A nationwide 10-year follow-up

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Abstract

Objective: Eating disorders are associated with subsequent alcohol problems, but it is not known whether this association also extends to broader eating disorder symptoms not captured by clinical diagnoses. We assessed the longitudinal association of broad eating disorder symptoms with alcohol problems in a nationwide twin sample (FinnTwin16).

Method: Finnish women ($N=1905$) and men ($N=1449$) self-reported their eating disorder symptoms using the Eating Disorder Inventory-2 Bulimia, Drive for Thinness, and Body Dissatisfaction subscales at the mean age of 24.4 years in 2000–2003. A subsample of participants also completed items on drive for muscularity, height dissatisfaction, and muscle-enhancing supplement use. Alcohol problems were assessed 10 years later at the age of 34.1 in 2010–2012 with the Rutgers Alcohol Problem Index.

Results: Eating disorder symptoms were associated with later alcohol problems (odds ratio per point increase 1.02–1.18). Bulimia showed stronger associations among men than women (p for interaction .012). Drive for muscularity and height dissatisfaction were also associated with later alcohol problems, but supplement use was not. When accounting for baseline alcohol problems, only Bulimia (among women and men) and Drive for Thinness (among men) were significantly associated with later alcohol problems. Bulimia was also significantly associated with later alcohol problems in within-twin-pair analyses among dizygotic twins, but not among monozygotic twins.

Discussion: In a longitudinal setting, eating disorder symptoms were associated with later alcohol problems. Bulimic symptoms were a stronger risk factor for men than women. These associations may be attributable to baseline alcohol problems, childhood environment and genetic liability.

Topics: Prevention, Treatment

For workshops only

No Answer Given

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