



Research Results on Eating Disorders in Diverse Populations

- ◆ A January 1994 Essence survey found that:
 - ★ **71.5%** of respondents reported being preoccupied with the desire to be thinner
 - ★ **71.5%** reported being “terrified” of being overweight
 - ★ **64.5%** were preoccupied with fat on their body
 - ★ **52%** reported being preoccupied with food
 - ★ **46%** reported feeling guilty after eating
 - ★ **39%** stated that food concerns virtually control their lives (Villarosa, 1994).
- ◆ African American girls aged 11-14 consistently scored higher than white girls of the same age on all Eating Disorder Inventory (EDI) scales measuring features commonly associated with eating disorders except for body dissatisfaction and drive for thinness (Striegel-Moore et al, 2000).
- ◆ Black girls may be especially vulnerable to developing eating disorders with binge eating features (Striegel-Moore, 2000).
- ◆ Browne (1993) reports that African-American women feel tremendous pressure as role models, and that as a result, feel they must be perfect in order to counteract negative stereotypes.
- ◆ Hall (1995) reports that Asian and Asian-American women are becoming increasingly susceptible to eating and body image problems.
- ◆ Yoshimura (1995) documented that Asian-American females are not immune to developing eating disorders.
- ◆ A study conducted by Robinson et al (1996) found that among the leanest 25% of 6th and 7th grade girls, Hispanics and Asians reported significantly more body dissatisfaction than did white girls.
- ◆ Numerous studies of various Native American populations have shown a high incidence of disordered eating symptoms among adolescents (Story, 1997).
- ◆ One study of adolescents belonging to the Chippewa tribe and living on a reservation in Michigan found that 74% were trying to lose weight, and of those, 75% were using at least one pathogenic weight control method (Rosen et al in Story, 1997).
- ◆ In studying Native American teenagers, Story et al (1997) found that 48.3% of girls and 30.5% of boys in grades 7-12 had dieted in the past year, and 28% of girls and 21% of boys reported purging behavior.
- ◆ In a study of Cuban American women, Jane, Hunter, and Lozzi (1999) found that close identification with Cuban culture was associated with lower EAT scores and may have a protective factor in the development of eating disorders.
- ◆ Chamorro & Flores-Ortiz (2000) found that second-generation Mexican-American women-those born in the US to foreign born parents-were the most acculturated and had the highest disordered eating patterns.
- ◆ Contradicting the common assumption that lesbian beauty mandates guard against body dissatisfaction, Striegel-Moore, Tucker, and Hsu (1990) found no significant difference between lesbian and heterosexual female undergraduates on measures of body dissatisfaction (In Myers, Taub, Morris, & Rothblum, 1999).
- ◆ Similarly, Beren, Hayden, Welfley, and Grilo (1996) found no significant differences in regards to body dissatisfaction between lesbian and heterosexual women, but did find more appearance dissatisfaction in gay men than in heterosexual men (In Myers, Taub, Morris, & Rothblum, 1999).
- ◆ In a study measuring body-image, weight concern, and eating patterns among 263 lesbian women, Hefferson (1999) found that lesbians were generally more critical of social norms concerning the roles of women, but not in regards to women's weight and appearance. In addition, the author found that 48% of the participants had dieted in the past 3 months, almost half were dissatisfied with their weight, and self-esteem was strongly linked to body satisfaction. As eloquently stated by Hefferson, "lesbians are no less heterogeneous than heterosexual women...it cannot be assumed that all lesbians equally reject or accept these societal (beauty) norms" (pg.123).

