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Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are the most common mental illness and affect over 30 million Americans. The number of teens with eating disorders has risen due to social media and the internet and the mortality rates are going up.

At least 30 million people of all ages and genders suffer from an eating disorder in the U.S, every 62 minutes at least one person dies as a direct result from an eating disorder. People around the world are suffering from eating disorders. Eating disorders have been part of our society for many years, but only recently has our society started to acknowledge these diseases. Eating disorders are found in young people, 95% of those with eating disorders are between the ages of 12 and 25.(“Binge Eating Disorder (for Teens).”) Eating disorders are most commonly found in girls, 10% of girls and young women suffer from an eating disorder(Eating Disorder Statistics). Although there is a smaller percentage of boys that have these disorders. They are still affected and can feel too embarrassed or ashamed that they don’t share these problems and get help. A lot of people don’t know about or don’t acknowledge eating disorders and when this happens people that may be suffering from one of these disorders might feel that they are alone and no one understands them.

There are three main types of eating disorders, the most common eating disorder in the US is Binge eating disorder, commonly called (BED). According to a national survey, BED affects an estimated 2.8 million people in the US. BED is a disorder where a person doesn't stop eating and feels they can’t control themselves, and can’t stop eating(“Binge Eating Disorder (for Teens).”). Usually, people that suffer from BED have frequent episodes of overeating. After they binge eat they tend to feel bad about themselves and often end up purging, not eating after eating a large sum of food(“Binge Eating Disorder for Teens.”). This is harmful to their digestive system and can cause symptoms such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart disease, osteoarthritis and sleep apnea. Another eating disorder is Anorexia, Anorexia is when someone spends a long time not eating, or eating very little(Teen Anorexia Statistics). Anorexia is a very dangerous disease and 5- 20 percent of teens who have anorexia will die for reasons related to the disorder. The last main eating disorder is bulimia, bulimia is when a person eats a meal and after eating persists in self-induced vomiting. This can cause a lot of harm to your body because the acid from your stomach could burn your throat cause stomach problems and harm your teeth. These are the most common eating disorders but many different kinds are less common but still occur. All eating disorders are overall very harmful to your body and can eventually lead to life-long problems and if not treated death.

There are a lot of causes of eating disorders. Eating disorders almost always stem from a person's insecurities, self-esteem, and self-image. Eating disorders can also be passed through genetics, so if a family member suffers from a disorder you are more likely too. The number of deaths from eating disorders has increased since social media and the internet have appeared. Most eating disorders are found in teen girls to young adults. There have been many studies done to find the causes of eating disorders and one said that “Teen anorexics tend to get insecure and see themselves as overweight. As a result, teens who are anorexic seek out unreasonable body-image goals.” (Teen Anorexia Statistics) In our society, people are pushing unreasonable goals onto young girls. This causes stress and anxiety and these things can cause young people to make bad decisions and harm themselves to fit into the social construct. Teen brains aren't fully developed, so they are more likely to make bad decisions and be affected by the expectations put on them by their peers and social media. Another cause could be a physical problem in one’s brain, the hypothalamus (the part of the brain that controls appetite) may fail to send proper messages about hunger and fullness. And serotonin, a normal brain chemical that affects mood and some compulsive behaviors, may also play a role in eating disorders.

To stop more deaths from eating disorders our society needs to stop pressuring young people to be perfect. And expect them to live up to a certain expectation of how we see beauty as a community. In today's society, more advertisements show unrealistic photoshopped images that young girls are looking at and thinking “that’s how I’m supposed to look.” With social media people are looking at their peers and others and comparing themselves to them. To prevent eating disorders we need to stop putting unrealistic body standards in ads and social media, we also need to stop pushing the mindset that looks are everything. I think respecting others in a form of kindness and if we as a society decide to stop judging and defining people by how they look. If people were to be kind less of these disorders would exist.

Sources used

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