Abstract

Introduction: Social appearance anxiety (SAA) and perfectionism may be common pathways between social anxiety and eating disorders (Hart et al., 2008; Levinson & Rodebaugh, 2012; Stice, 2002).

Method: Participants completed measures of social appearance anxiety, perfectionism, eating restraint, and body mass index (BMI) at two time points, two to three months apart.

Results: SAA and maladaptive perfectionism at Time 1 both uniquely predicted restrained eating at Time 2. Restraint at Time 1 significantly predicted BMI at Time 2 over and above BMI at Time 1.

Discussion: SAA and maladaptive perfectionism predict restrained eating. Restrained eating predicts BMI; this is the first study to demonstrate that this relationship holds over time.

Introduction

- Social appearance anxiety (SAA) is the fear that one will be negatively evaluated because of one’s appearance (Hart et al., 2008).
- SAA predicts disordered eating beyond other domains of social anxiety (Levinson & Rodebaugh, 2012).
- Perfectionism is described as a risk factor for both disordered eating (e.g., Tyrka et al., 2002) and social anxiety (Heimberg, 1995).
- In laboratory studies, restraint interacts with stress to produce overeating (Greeno & Wing, 1994); thus, we expect that restraint may lead to weight gain (i.e., increased BMI over time).
- Individuals high in SAA and perfectionism may seek to reduce social anxiety about their appearance through restrained eating.
- Prior research has not determined what individual differences lead to the development of restrained eating.
- Tested in current study: Relationship between SAA, maladaptive perfectionism, and eating restraint across two time points.
- Relationship between restrained eating and BMI across two time points.

Hypotheses

- Higher SAA and perfectionism will predict higher eating restraint.
- Higher eating restraint will predict higher BMI over time.

Participants

- Time 1 (N = 97)
- Time 2 (N = 94)
- All women, mostly Caucasian (N = 62, 64%)
- Mean age of 18.77 (SD = 1.08)

Procedures

- Participants came into lab and filled out packet of measures at Time 1 and Time 2, two to three months later.
- Research assistants measured participants’ height and weight in the lab at Time 1 and Time 2. These data were used to calculate BMI.

Results: Time 1

Figure 1. Zero-order correlations between restraint, perfectionism, depression, and social anxiety

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<th>SAAS</th>
<th>Maladaptive Perfectionism</th>
<th>Eating Restraint</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Fear of Scrutiny</th>
<th>S-SIAS</th>
<th>BMI</th>
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<tr>
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<td>.32**</td>
<td>.05</td>
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</table>

SAAS = Social Appearance Anxiety Scale; S-SIAS = Social Interaction Anxiety Scale; **p < .01, *p < .05; The diagonal is Cronbach’s Alpha.

Discussion

- SAAD and MEC predict eating restraint
- SAA (part r = .26, p = .018) and maladaptive perfectionism (part r = .22, p = .046) at Time 1 both uniquely predicted restrained eating at Time 2 over and above restrained eating (part r = .65, p < .001), depression, fear of scrutiny, and social interaction anxiety at Time 1.
- Eating restraint predicts MEC, not SAA.
- Restrained eating at Time 1 was not a significant predictor of SAA at Time 2 (p = .528), but restrained eating at Time 1 (part r = .23, p = .032) did significantly predict maladaptive perfectionism at Time 2.
- Eating restraint predicts BMI.
- Restrained eating at Time 1 (part r = .38, p < .001) significantly predicted BMI at Time 2 over and above BMI at Time 1.

Regression Analyses

Does social appearance anxiety and maladaptive perfectionism predict restrained eating over time?

Elizabeth N. Riley, Cheri A. Levinson, & Thomas L. Rodebaugh
Washington University in St. Louis