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Eating disorders and attachment processes in Greek University students: The mediating role of body dissatisfaction.

This paper examines the effects of insecure attachment on the development of negative body image, as a contributing factor to the development of disturbed eating patterns, in male and female university students. Participants were non-clinical Greek male (n=100) and female (n=381) university students. Demographic information (gender, age), anthropometric data (BMI, age), romantic attachment (ECRS-R), body dissatisfaction (BSQ), and disturbed eating (EAT-26) were assessed using self-report questionnaires. Body dissatisfaction was found to fully mediate the relationship between attachment anxiety and disordered eating in women. Body dissatisfaction mediated anxious attachment and dieting in men. In addition, attachment avoidance had a direct impact on eating behaviours for both genders, without the mediation of any variables measured in this study. The findings suggest that the anxiety and avoidance dimensions of attachment insecurity, impact differently on eating behaviours, and across genders. Results are discussed in the context of counselling interventions design within the university setting.