

# 111 Factors Associated with Orthorexia Symptoms and Disordered Eating Behaviors in Young Women with Cancer

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## 1. Background/Rationale or Objectives/Purpose

A cancer diagnosis can motivate people to modify lifestyle behaviors that they believe could influence their prognosis or recurrence risk. Orthorexia (ON) is a disordered eating behavior (DEB) that involves a fixation on health-conscious eating behaviors. This research explored the presence of ON symptoms in a sample of young adult (YA) females with cancer and explored what factors may be associated with ON and DEB symptom severity.

## 2. Methodology or Methods

Ninety-three YA females with cancer between the ages of 19 and 39 participated in an online survey. The Düsseldorf Orthorexia Scale and the Eating Habits Questionnaire measured ON severity and DEBs. Linear regressions were used to identify associations between ON severity, DEBs, fear of cancer recurrence, body image dissatisfaction, intolerance of uncertainty, and internet use.

## 3. Impact on Practice or Results

The mean age was 31 with an average of 17 years of education. Overall, 36.7% of participants reported clinically significant ON symptoms and 20.4% were at risk for ON. More intolerance of uncertainty was related to increased ON severity ( $\beta = 211, p = 0.05$ ). Greater fear of recurrence was associated with more problems resulting from healthy eating ( $\beta = 213, p = 0.05$ ). Less time spent online for personal reasons was related to more positive feelings associated with healthy eating ( $\beta = -0.206, p = 0.05$ ). Greater dissatisfaction with body image was related to more perceived knowledge of healthy eating ( $\beta = -0.236, p = 0.03$ ).

## 4. Discussion or Conclusions

YA females with cancer are showing symptoms of ON that are associated with potentially modifiable psychological factors.