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E-25 Free Communication/Poster - Body Image and Eating Disorders: MAY 29, 2009 7:30 AM  
- 12:30 PM ROOM: Hall 4F

### **A Preliminary Survey Of College Cheerleaders For Symptoms Of Eating Disorders: 2369: Board #14 May 29 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM**

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**INTRODUCTION:** While some may not consider cheerleading a sport, it still shares some of the same pressures as those sports that require a low body weight. An emphasis on maintaining a low body weight raises the potential for the occurrence of eating disorders among those participating in this activity.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this study was to use the Eating Disorders Inventory-2 (EDI-2) to evaluate the potential for eating disorders among college cheerleaders.

**METHODS:** Participants were 28 college cheerleaders from four universities. All participants were asked to fill out the Eating Disorder Inventory-Symptoms Checklist (EDI-SC) and the EDI-2 anonymously and return the packets to a sealed box. The questionnaires were then coded and analyzed to provide descriptive information regarding the participants and the subscales of the EDI-2. Descriptive statistics were used to characterize the potential for eating disorders among college cheerleaders. Independent t-tests were used to compare subjects with eating disorders to those without eating disorders.

**RESULTS:** The 28 college cheerleaders were all females with an average age of 19.5 yrs ( $\pm 1.6$ ) and an average height and weight of 63.3 in ( $\pm 2.9$ ) and 122 lbs ( $\pm 16.2$ ), respectively. The mean for the highest weight (excluding pregnancy) was 127 lbs ( $\pm 17.6$ ) and included a female who currently weighed 173 lbs with a height of 67 in. The means of all of the subscales fell within the normal ranges for college females with the exception of the "Maturity Fears" subscale. A mean value of 2.7 is considered appropriate for college females, while in the current study the "Maturity Fears" subscale indicated a mean value of 5.0. Individual profiles of the subscales were determined for each of the 28 participants. This led to the separation of seven of the original group of 28 cheerleaders into a subgroup with symptoms of disordered eating. The subscales of the high disordered eating group were significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) from the low

disordered eating group with the exception of the Perfectionism and Maturity Fears subscales.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Twenty five percent of the cheerleaders sampled were identified as having an eating disorder. This finding suggests that cheerleaders may comprise a group that includes those with eating disorders.

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