Abstract

Introduction

Eating disorders are relatively common, affecting approximately 1% of the general population. Like many other psychological conditions, eating disorders are somewhat stigmatized in our society. Because of this, patients may be reluctant to discuss these disorders with their physician. Nonetheless, their clinical presentation could be noticed by an adequately trained clinician based on several fundamental and easily recognizable signs. Therefore, it is important for all physicians, despite their specialty, to have a basic knowledge of the diagnostic criteria surrounding eating disorders. For diseases like anorexia and bulimia, early detection is often key to effective treatment. That way, a multidisciplinary and holistic approach can be taken for the diagnosis and management of affected individuals.

Aim of Study

The purpose of doing this study is to investigate the average U.S. physicians knowledge of eating disorders, diagnostic criteria, and current screening methods.

Material/Methods

We have conducted self-answered questionnaires with physicians across multiple specialties in the United States and Poland. The questionnaire asks medical student level, basic questions about the clinical presentation of various eating disorders. It also assesses the physicians' knowledge of the current screening methods for eating disorders, and includes a simple survey to collect demographic information about the participant and their overall opinions about the screening, diagnosis and treatment of eating disorders.

Results

We expect a majority of physicians to be fairly familiar with most aspects of eating disorders recognition and diagnosis, but there may be some lack of knowledge when it comes to the current, recommended screening methods.

Conclusion

We hope to be able to raise to light, amongst the medical community, the importance of screening for easily preventable psychological disorders such as eating disorders. It is important for physicians across specialties to have a basic understanding of this since the presentation can easily be caught within their scopes of practice. The stigma of eating disorder may be associated with dysfunctional thoughts that may interfere with treatment. Further awareness in the medical community and discussions with patients may possibly mitigate stigma.