Body Image in Collegiate Male Athletes: Education and Awareness on an Underexplored Topic

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Isn’t That a “Girl Thing?”

A literature review of Male Body Image in Athletics
Body Image

Body image involves perceptions and attitudes toward one’s own physical appearance (Phillips & deMan, 2010)
A History

- Ancient Greece and Rome
- Socialization of male identity
  - The ideal male body is associated with leanness and muscularity (e.g., Baghurst 2009)
- Social Construction

(e.g., Baghurst 2009, Alexander, 2003; Mishkind, Rodin, Silberstein, & Striegel-Moore, 1986)
Predictors

- Wrestling
  - 5% satisfied with weight
- Football
  - 37% satisfied with weight
- Running
  - 5-10% met conditions for muscle dysmorphia

(Peters & Phelps, 2001; Parks & Read, 1997)
Why Should we Care?

- Negative Body Image ➔
- Lower Self-esteem
- Risk for Deleterious Health Effects
  - Exercise Dependency
  - Eating Disorders
  - Muscle Dysmorphia
  - Depression/Anxiety
  - Suicide

- Positive Body Image ➔
- High Self-esteem
- Self-Efficacy
  - Higher academic achievement
  - Lower behavior problems
  - Higher athletic performance

(Morgan, 2003; Thompson et al., 1999)
Best Practices for Practitioners

(Burlew & Shurts, 2013)

**Prevention**
- Psychoeducational
  - Distinguishing between healthy v. excessive exercise
  - Teaching proper food choices for lifestyle
  - Unlinking physical appearance and self-worth

- Workshops, seminars, wellness programs, social media

**Intervention Process**
- Ask questions
- Body Image Ideals questionnaire
- Counseling and Group Therapy
  - Cognitive dissonance
  - Abstaining from unhealthy behaviors
- Trans-theoretical model, motivational interviewing, gender-sensitive therapy
Take Home Points

1.) Male do suffer from BID
2.) Diagnostic criteria is gender specific
   ->Should it be?
Questions? Thank you?