

# BODY DISSATISFACTION, COMPULSIVE EXERCISE AND ALCOHOL USE AMONG SWEDISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. A LONGITUDINAL ASSESSMENT OF RISK FOR DEPRESSION.

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## Sustainable UNiversity life

### Conclusions

Body dissatisfaction, compulsive training, and alcohol use increase the risk for moderate depression or worse among university students. There is a need to increase the knowledge about risk factors for the development of mental health problems among university students to develop sound strategies for prevention.

### Introduction

Research assessing the impact of compulsive exercise, body dissatisfaction and alcohol use in non-clinical samples are lacking, particularly among college students. These constructs have been reported relevant for mental health problems, and both body dissatisfaction and alcohol use have documented associations with depression and anxiety disorders. There is an urgent need to address the escalating global health problems of substance use and mental health problems, and how they intertwine in students.

### Aim

The overall aim of this study is to advance the knowledge about mental health problems and musculoskeletal pain in university students.

### Methods

This study is based on data from the SUN-study, a dynamic longitudinal cohort study of university students in Sweden. The overall aim is to advance the knowledge about mental health problems and pain in university students. The study included 4262 students, assessed five times over one year with a web-based survey. Cox regression was used to estimate hazard rate ratio of depression.

### Results

Body dissatisfaction, compulsive training and alcohol use increased the risk over time for at least one event of depression.

Variable	Crude HRR *	95 % CI	Adjusted HRR **	95 % CI
CET – WCE	1.05	1.03 - 1.06	0.97	0.95 - 0.99
CET - ARDB	1.04	1.03 - 1.05	1.03	1.02 - 1.04
BSQ	1.04	1.04 - 1.05	1.05	1.03 - 1.06
Alcohol	1.04	1.03 - 1.05	1.03	1.02 - 1.04

Alcohol = The Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST) Alcohol risk score, BSQ = Body Dissatisfaction Questionnaire, CET = Compulsive Exercise Test, WCE = Weight Control Exercise subscale, ARDB = Avoidance and Rule driven behaviour subscale

\* Depression is defined as > 12 on the Depression subscale of the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale, the HRR refers to a one unit increase on the exposure scale.

\*\* The adjusted estimates are controlled for all exposures, age and sex.

An independent RCT using an internet-based intervention for students scoring at least moderate symptoms of depression along with co-occurrent pain has been proposed as a step towards developing sound and available strategies to prevent mental health problems, including body dissatisfaction, alcohol use and compulsive training among young adults.



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