

Eating disorders and body image concerns among medical students in Syria: a study on prevalence and risk factors

Submission date 20/06/2025	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered
Registration date 20/06/2025	Overall study status Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Last Edited 20/06/2025	Condition category Mental and Behavioural Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan
		<input type="checkbox"/> Results
		<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Eating disorders such as anorexia, bulimia, or binge-eating are serious mental health conditions that affect how people eat and feel about their bodies. Medical students face high stress and pressure, which may put them at risk for these problems. However, no studies have looked at eating disorders among medical students in Syria. This study aimed to:

1. Measure how common eating disorders and body image concerns are among medical students at Aleppo University.
2. Compare risks between male and female students.
3. Check if body mass index (BMI) is linked to these issues.

Who can participate?

Medical students (any year) aged 18 years or older at Aleppo University

What does the study involve?

Participants filled out a 15–20 minute anonymous survey online, answering questions about:

1. Their eating habits
2. How they feel about their body shape
3. Basic details like age, gender, weight, and height (to calculate BMI)

No treatments or follow-ups were required - it was a one-time survey.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Benefits: Helps universities understand students' mental health needs and design better support programs.

Risks: Some questions might feel personal, but participation was voluntary, and answers were kept private.

Where is the study run from?

Aleppo University (Syria)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
February 2024 to March 2024

Who is funding the study?
Investigator initiated and funded

Who is the main contact?
Mawadda Chukr, mawadaug1@gmail.com

Contact information

Type(s)

Public, Scientific, Principal Investigator

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Additional identifiers

EudraCT/CTIS number

Nil known

IRAS number

ClinicalTrials.gov number

Nil known

Secondary identifying numbers

Nil known

Study information

Scientific Title

Prevalence of eating disorders and body shape concerns among medical students at Aleppo University, Syria: a cross-sectional study assessing gender differences and BMI associations

Acronym

EDMS-SYR

Study objectives

1. To determine the prevalence of disordered eating attitudes (using EAT-26) and body shape concerns (using BSQ-34) among medical students at Aleppo University, Syria.
2. To assess gender differences in eating disorder risk and body dissatisfaction.
3. To examine the relationship between BMI categories and disordered eating behaviors/body image concerns.

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)

Approved 02/02/2024, Local Research Ethics Committee of Aleppo University-CME (Aleppo, Aleppo, -, Syria; -, cmoffice@alepuniv.edu.sy), ref: 7

Study design

Single-center cross-sectional observational study

Primary study design

Observational

Secondary study design

Cross sectional study

Study setting(s)

University/medical school/dental school

Study type(s)

Screening

Participant information sheet

Not available in web format, please use the contact details to request a participant information sheet

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Eating disorders (EDs) and body image concerns

Interventions

Participants are medical students at Aleppo University who voluntarily complete an anonymous online survey. The survey includes three sections:

1. Demographics (age, gender, BMI, academic year, income, smoking/exercise habits)
2. Eating disorder screening (26-item EAT-26 questionnaire)
3. Body image assessment (34-item BSQ-34 questionnaire)

Duration:

Participation: single session (~15–20 minutes).

Observation period: survey open for 2 months (February–March 2024)

Follow-up: none (cross-sectional design)

Process:

Enrollment: Students access the survey via email/Telegram links.

Participation: After providing electronic consent, they complete the survey in one sitting

(mandatory responses to prevent missing data).

Completion: Responses are anonymized and stored securely; participants may withdraw before submission.

No interventions, clinical visits, or further contact occur.

Intervention Type

Other

Primary outcome measure

Prevalence of high-risk eating disorders: the proportion of participants scoring ≥ 20 on the Eating Attitudes Test-26 (EAT-26) at a single assessment at survey completion (February–March 2024)

Secondary outcome measures

1. Severity of body shape dissatisfaction measured using the Body Shape Questionnaire-34 (BSQ-34) at a single assessment at survey completion
2. Gender differences in eating disorder risk: comparison of EAT-26 scores (≥ 20 vs < 20) between males and females at a single assessment at survey completion
3. Association between BMI categories and disordered eating: EAT-26 scores across BMI groups (underweight, normal, overweight, obese) at a single assessment at survey completion
4. Demographic correlates (e.g., academic year, income): links between EAT-26/BSQ-34 scores and demographics in a self-reported demographic survey at a single assessment at survey completion

Overall study start date

05/02/2024

Completion date

30/03/2024

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. Enrolled as an undergraduate medical student at Aleppo University, Syria, during the study period (February–March 2024)
2. Aged 18 years or older (no upper age limit, as the study targets all academic years)
3. Willing and able to provide electronic informed consent prior to survey participation
4. Access to an internet-connected device (to complete the online survey via Google Forms)
5. Proficiency in Arabic (the survey was administered in Arabic)

Participant type(s)

Learner/student

Age group

Adult

Lower age limit

18 Years

Sex

Both

Target number of participants

500

Total final enrolment

310

Key exclusion criteria

1. Non-medical students (e.g., students enrolled in other faculties or programs at Aleppo University)
2. Individuals unable to complete the survey independently due to cognitive or language barriers (e.g., non-Arabic speakers)
3. Duplicate submissions (prevented by requiring unique email addresses for survey access)

Date of first enrolment

05/02/2024

Date of final enrolment

30/03/2024

Locations

Countries of recruitment

Syria

Study participating centre

Aleppo University

Faculty of Medicine

Aleppo University Campus

Aleppo

Syria

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Sponsor information

Organisation

University of Aleppo

Sponsor details

Universities Square

Aleppo

Syria

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Sponsor type
University/education

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ROR
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Funder(s)

Funder type
Other

Funder Name
Investigator initiated and funded

Results and Publications

Publication and dissemination plan
Results will be submitted to a high-impact peer-reviewed journal and disseminated through academic and public channels to maximize reach

Intention to publish date
01/08/2025

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
IPD will not be shared to protect participant privacy

IPD sharing plan summary
Not expected to be made available