

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

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<b>Registration date</b> 20/06/2025	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Last Edited</b> 20/06/2025	<b>Condition category</b> 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

### Contact name

Miss Mawadda Chukr

### ORCID ID

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-4508-9015>

### Contact details

Aleppo

Aleppo

Syria

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+963 (0)981114394

mawadaug1@gmail.com

## Additional identifiers

### Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)

Nil known

### Protocol serial number

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**

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### **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

### **Study type(s)**

Screening

### **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(s)**

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

### **Key secondary outcome(s)**

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 ( $\geq 20$  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

**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

**Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

**Age group**

Adult

**Lower age limit**

18 years

**Sex**

All

**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

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/03mzvzx96>

## Funder(s)

**Funder type**

Other

**Funder Name**

Investigator initiated and funded

## Results and Publications

**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