ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN SEX, BODY MASS INDEX, ANXIETY, AND EMOTIONAL EATING AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SURAKARTA, CENTRAL JAVA

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ABSTRACT

Background: Emotional eating may be part of a psychological disorder as a way of coping with emotions or stresses in life. In the adolescent phase, immature cognitive development causes vulnerability to stress and anxiety due to social interaction. These negative emotions may impact on their eating behavior. This study aimed to determine associations between sex, body mass index (BMI), anxiety, and emotional eating among adolescents in Surakarta.

Subjects and Method: A cross sectional study was carried out at senior high schools in Surakarta, in July 2019. A sample of 104 high school students aged 15-17 years old was selected by cluster random sampling. The dependent variable was emotional eating. The independent variables were gender, body mass index (BMI), and anxiety. Emotional eating was measured by Emotional Eater Questionnaire (EEQ). Body weight was measured by weight scale. Body height was measured by microtoise. Anxiety was measured by Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HARS). The data were analyzed by a multiple logistic regression.

Results: Prevalence of emotional eating in adolescents was 42.3% (53.7% female and 21.6% male). 57.6% adolescents experienced anxiety and 80.8% categorized as overweight/obese. The risk of emotional eating increased with female sex (OR= 0.14; 95% CI= 0.04 to 0.45; p= 0.001), overweight/obesity (OR= 14.32; 95% CI= 3.69 to 55.46; p<0.001), and anxiety (OR= 9.97; 95% CI= 2.93 to 33.91; p<0.001).

Conclusion: The risk of emotional eating increased with female sex, overweight/ obesity, and anxiety.

Keywords: emotional eating, anxiety, obesity, adolescents

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