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Adolescent idiopathic scoliosis and eating disorders: Is there a relation? Results of a cross-sectional study.

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Abstract

A recent **study** suggests a correlation between **idiopathic scoliosis** in adolescence and **eating disorders**. However, this does not correspond with our clinical experience in the same population. The aim of this **study** was to verify the correlation between **scoliosis** and **eating disorders** in adolescence. A **cross-sectional study** was designed including 187 consecutive **adolescent** girls with a diagnosis of **idiopathic scoliosis** (mean Cobb angle 26°, range 11-73°, age 15.2±2.5; 24% juveniles, 76% **adolescent** type) and 93 schoolgirls as controls (age 14.9±1.0). All of the participants answered the Italian validated questionnaire EAT-26 about **eating** habits in order to identify any **eating disorders**. Body mass index (BMI) was calculated for all participants and compared to reference data. Statistical Analysis: chi-square test, Student's t-test, Pearson's correlation coefficient. Only 3 (1.6%; 95% CI -0.2-3.4%) participants in the **scoliosis** group showed EAT-26 scores suggestive for **eating disorders** versus 7 (7.5%; 95% CI 2.2-12.9%) in the school population ($p<0.05$). The BMI was slightly lower ($p<0.05$) for **scoliosis** patients (19±0.2) than for school girls (21±0.3). EAT-26 is recognized among the most valid questionnaires for **eating disorders** and has been widely applied in various countries. By applying this questionnaire, a lower incidence of **eating disorders** in female **scoliosis** patients was found than in the general population (using both our own controls and Italian reference values). This contrasts with some expert opinions and a recent **study** performed in Italy. The low BMI already reported in the literature as being typical of **scoliosis** participants is confirmed by our data.

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