

Abstract

The present study investigated the extent of disordered eating behaviors and associated psychological characteristics among Chinese female ballet dancers in Hong Kong. Sixty-two young ballet students, 30 professional ballet dancers, 27 non-ballet dancers as well as female non-dancers were compared with respect to eating behaviors and psychological characteristics. The results showed that 1.6% of the dancers were classified as anorexic, 1.6% were classified as having bulimia nervosa and 0.8% reported consistent binge-eating problems. There was a high prevalence of disordered eating behaviors among dancers, especially among the professional ballet dancers. The degree of disturbed eating and psychological pathologies were also found to be related to highly competitive settings and high level of commitment in ballet dancing.