Abstract

Objective: Findings from past research indicated that impulsivity plays a role in the development of bulimia nervosa. Some studies developed a construct of "multi-impulsivity" as an index to measure impulsiveness level. The present study examined the role of multi-impulsivity in the development of bulimic features among Chinese female adolescents in Hong Kong. Method: Adolescent girls (N= 1215) from six secondary schools in Hong Kong were recruited for this study. Subjects completed questionnaires assessing impulsivity, depression, and disordered eating attitudes and behaviors. Results: The construct of "multi-impulsivity" was found to be valid in the current sample, as evidenced by the correlations with other indices of impulsiveness. It was also useful in predicting bulimic symptoms, with the multi-impulsive group being more disturbed and exhibited more bulimic symptoms. Moreover, impulsivity interacted with drive for thinness and dieting in predicting bulimic symptoms. The interaction was different for drive for thinness and restrained dieting, suggesting the relationship among these factors might be more complicated than expected. Discussion: The current findings were discussed with reference to possible underlying brain mechanisms. The construct validity of multi-impulsivity and its relationship to bulimic symptoms supported the use of this construct as a risk factor to identify individuals at-risk for bulimia.