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©Journal of Sports Science and Medicine (2015) 14 , 627 - 633

Research article

Big Five Personality Traits and Eating Attitudes in Intensively Training Dancers: The Mediating Role of Internalized Thinness Norms

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ABSTRACT

Dancers are at high risk of developing disordered eating attitudes, notably because of internalized thinness norms. Although the big five personality traits have been shown to be associated with eating attitudes in daily life, in dancers where eating issues and thinness norms internalization could be salient little is known about these associations and the role of the internalization of thinness norms in this relationship. The main objectives of this study were thus to examine the relationships between the personality traits defined in the big five model and the self-regulation of eating attitudes, and to assess the role of internalized thinness norms in this association. The study included 180 intensively training dancers with an average age of 15.6 years (SD = 2.8). Dancers completed questionnaires measuring the big five personality traits, internalization of thinness norms and self-regulation of eating attitudes in sport. Bootstrapped mediation analyses showed that neuroticism was negatively associated with self-regulation of eating attitudes, both

directly and indirectly through the mediating role of internalized thinness norms. This study suggested that: (a) neuroticism is a vulnerability factor for self-regulation of eating attitudes in dancers, as already evidenced in the general population, and (b) the internalization of thinness norms is a pathway through which neuroticism affects self-regulation of eating attitudes. The big five model is therefore partially related to the internalization of thinness norms and eating attitudes in dancers.

Key words: Disordered eating, dance, big five model, neuroticism

Key Points

- The big five model relates to the internalization of thinness norms and eating attitudes in dancers.
- Neuroticism is negatively related to the self-regulation of eating attitudes.
- The internalization of thinness norms is correlated to the relationship between neuroticism and self-regulation of eating attitudes

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