

Eating behavior problems in preadolescence – a general population study of 11-12-year old Danish children (CCC2000)

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Background: Childhood eating problems are one of the most frequent concerns presented to paediatricians. Most of these problems are transient and improve with age, but some persist and might have deleterious consequences for the child's physical health and emotional well being. A range of eating problems is clinically seen in preadolescence, but studies in this age group are scarce. In the general population study (CCC2000) clusters of eating behaviours, differentially associated with impact and psychopathology at age 5-7 years were identified. These findings indicate that some eating problems seem to represent extreme variants of normal eating behaviours, whereas some seem to represent indicators or 'at risk' states of mental disorders. This study aims to explore the distribution and correlates of eating behaviours and disordered eating in preadolescence.

Methods: The study is a sub study of the 11-12-year follow-up of the Copenhagen Child Cohort study 2000 (CCC2000), which is a general population birth cohort study of 6090 children born in 2000. We used the Childhood Eating Assessment Questionnaire (CEAQ) and the Eating Pattern Inventory (EPI) and the Children's Figure Rating Scale, of which CEAQ and EPI also were used in the 5-7-year follow-up. The measures of eating behaviours were obtained from self-report questionnaires answered electronically by children and their parents. The children also had a hands-on assessment at the clinic measuring height, weight and pubertal status.

Results: Out of 4811 eligible children at the 11-12-year follow-up, data on eating behaviours were obtained on 2138 children (48% boys and 52% girls). Data analyses are ongoing and the results of the study will be ended spring 2013. Data on the distribution of eating behaviours and their physical and psychological correlates at child age 11-12 will be presented.

Perspectives: The study is expected to contribute knowledge about the distribution and correlates of eating behaviours in preadolescence. The prospective data in CCC2000 and the results of the present study gives a unique opportunity to describe the longitudinal course of childhood eating problems and 'at risk' states of problematic eating behaviours from early childhood into preadolescence.