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SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FEMINIZATION OF EATING DISORDERS

Rachel Rothman

Mentor: Colin Bassett

Today, many individuals develop eating disorders; however, eating disorders are typically associated with women. In this work, I declare that male eating disorders are stigmatized due to the feminization of eating disorders. I explain that the stigma exists in part due to the way males are portrayed in the media as muscular, bold, and strong. Individuals in society value men who look and act in this way, which is what causes men to become insecure about the way they look and increases their likelihood of developing eating disorders. Professionals who adopt socially constructed, gendered views of men are unable to conduct objective research on male eating disorders and diagnose them correctly. I illustrate how the stigma prevents men from recognizing their own unhealthy behaviors and can deter individuals from recognizing eating disorder-related behaviors in other men. Throughout the essay, I provide my own analysis regarding how to combat the stigmatization of eating disorders, which can be accomplished by altering the way we view men in the public eye, research male eating disorders, diagnose male eating disorders, and treat men with eating disorders. I conducted my research by using wide variety of scholarly articles as well as a book on male eating disorders. However, much of my research involved critically analyzing scholarly articles on eating disorders as a whole. I hope to provide a better understanding of the stigmatization of male eating disorders and the implications of doing so. In the coming years, I hope to see significant progress made in reducing the stigmatization of male eating disorders.