

The relationship between weight stigma and eating behavior is explained by weight bias internalization and psychological distress

It is well evidenced that weight-based stigma and discrimination is associated with disordered eating, however the psychological mechanisms that underpin this association are not well researched.

This study tested whether the association between weight stigma experiences and disordered eating behaviors (emotional eating, uncontrolled eating, and loss-of-control eating) are mediated by weight bias internalisation and psychological distress.

The study included 634 Australian university students. Participant data was gathered via an online survey which measured:

- Experience of weight stigma
- Extent of weight bias internalisation
- Psychological distress
- Eating behaviours

Results showed that the majority of participants had experienced weight stigma. Statistical analysis elucidated a significant association between weight stigma and disordered eating, internalised weight bias, and psychological distress. Further to this, weight bias internalisation and psychological distress mediated the relationship between weight stigma and disordered eating behavior - this indicating potential entry points for interventions.

O'Brien, Kerry S., et al. "The Relationship between Weight Stigma and Eating Behavior Is Explained by Weight Bias Internalization and Psychological Distress." *Appetite*, vol. 102, July 2016, pp. 70–76, 10.1016/j.appet.2016.02.032.