



THE BRITISH DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

The Professional Association for Registered Dietitians
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Media Release

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For immediate release

Eating disorders not just affecting young women

Eating disorder specialists are seeing more and more women over 50 years old and men in their clinics.

Members of the Mental Health Group of the British Dietetic Association are reporting a change in the type of service users they are seeing. Over the past few years they have witnessed more diagnosed cases of eating disorders in both men and older women.

This is backed up by research¹ which shows that increasingly boys and men are suffering with eating disorders and related body image problems. Some have full-blown conditions such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia or binge eating

Eating disorders comprise both psychological and physiological components, and as a result treatments require an integrated understanding of the nutritional, physiological and psychological aspects of these disorders.

Registered dietitians play an essential role within multidisciplinary teams and are involved in the assessment, treatment and monitoring of patients with a range of eating disorders, as well as providing patients with accurate and relevant information. Poor eating patterns and unhealthy views surrounding food are primarily symptoms of an eating disorder, but not generally the cause. Dietary concerns can be addressed by a dietitian, leaving other health professionals in the team free to focus on the underlying or causative issues.

Ursula Philpot, dietitian at the Yorkshire Centre for Eating Disorders and chair of the BDA's Mental Health Group said: "Ten years ago it was extremely rare to see older women and men with eating disorders in an in-patient unit. But today, in a ward of 20 beds, it is more usual to have at least a couple of older women and one man in at any time.

"While it could be a result of better diagnosis and treating cases in these groups, it may reflect a more general changing demographic trend but at this stage we just don't know. In response we have had to develop specific treatments to address issues pertinent to these groups."

Media enquiries to The British Dietetic Association should be directed to our media hotline on 0870 850 2517 or pr@bda.uk.com.

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Notes to Editors

1. The Prevalence and Correlates of Eating Disorders in the National Co-morbidity Survey publication (2007).
2. The British Dietetic Association, founded in 1936, is the professional association for registered dietitians in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is the nation's largest organisation of food and nutrition professionals with nearly 6,000 members. About two-thirds of members are employed in the National Health Service. The remaining members work in education, industry, research, sport settings or freelance.
3. Registered dietitians hold the only legally-recognisable graduate qualification in nutrition and dietetics. They are experts in interpreting and translating the science of nutrition into practical ways of promoting nutritional well-being, disease treatment and the prevention of nutrition-related problems. Their advice is sound and based on current scientific evidence.
4. Registration, awarded by the Health Professionals Council, is an indication that a dietitian is fit to practise and is working within an agreed statement of conduct.
5. For further details about the British Dietetic Association, please visit our website: www.bda.uk.com.