

Abstract

Introduction: Eating disorders are a serious disease the incidence of which is rising in the population. The most serious are anorexia and bulimia nervosa. These diseases are often accompanied by excessive physical activity, which is used to reduce weight and simultaneously as a compensatory mechanism for dissatisfaction with one's own body. The persistent presence of excessive exercise is often a common cause of relapse of the eating disorders. The treatment must be comprehensive and time consuming.

Target: The main aim of the study was to map the incidence and nature of excessive physical activity in female patients with a diagnosis of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. To determine whether it affects the weight gain of underweight patients and whether there are differences in the frequency or nature of excessive exercise among patients attending a day hospital and patients hospitalized in the ward.

Methodology: The research group includes 50 female patients of the Centre for Eating Disorders at the General University Hospital in Prague (Všeobecná fakultní nemocnice v Praze). The patients were diagnosed with anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa and were older than 18 years. All filled in an EED19 questionnaire at the beginning of the treatment, were weighed, measured, and their body mass index (BMI) was calculated. Subsequently, the questionnaires were evaluated by standard quantitative data analysis. In patients with a BMI of 17.5 or less, total weight gain was calculated at the end of the treatment and found the relationship with the extent and severity of excessive exercise. Furthermore, the resulting EPA values were compared among the groups of patients divided on the basis of the treatment place.

Results: Excessive physical activity of medium and high severity, evaluated according to the degree of the Likert's scale, occurs in 72% of patients. Qualitatively, the compulsive component is represented most, immediately followed by exercises aimed at weight and body shaping. In contrast to that, exercises for health and perception of body signals occurs at low intensity. Quantitatively, exercise in the interval of 30-60 minutes several times a day until sweating and even loss of breath prevails. The overall weight gain of underweight patients was affected by the excessive physical activity which had reached the 4th group of high severity, in average it was 2.5 kg lower. The differences between the patients from the ward and from the day hospital concerned the nature of the exercise. Exercises focused on body shaping and weight prevailed in the day hospital, the total average load of excessive physical activity was comparable in both groups.

Conclusion: At almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of patients with a diagnosis of anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa in the acute stage, severe excessive physical activity was present with a predominance of the compulsive component of high-level exercise. Therefore, this fact must be approached sensitively and at the same time consistently. Thanks to timely monitoring, comprehensive treatment and suitable program it is possible to prevent further deepening or persistence in excessive exercise and achieve changes in the nature of physical activity.