

Eating disorders rampant among college students

Studies show 16 percent of collegiate women in America show signs of an eating disorder

By Brandy Berry
Kentucky Kernel
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LEXINGTON, Ky. -- The dreaded freshmen 15 lbs is not a problem for some college students.

That's because some students will never be found at the student union eating pizza.

They will be found on the treadmills. They will be found purging.

Each year 16 percent of collegiate women in America and 7 million women overall show some signs of having an eating disorder, said Dr. Laurie Humphries, University of Kentucky Medical Center psychiatrist specializing in eating disorders. Two-thirds will battle the disease for a lifetime, while one-third will be cured through treatment and counseling.

"Eating disorders are extremely common in collegiate women," Humphries said. "There are many more who are afflicted in a college

population than in a high school population."

The causes of anorexia nervosa and bulimia are as different as the diseases themselves. Humphries attributes the college atmosphere to

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University of Kentucky Medical Center

exacerbating the diseases in some cases.

"If there is a sorority house with one or two who have eating disorders, they may influence others," Humphries said. "Pretty soon, you have a 'group phenomena' where everyone is severely restricting food intake."

However, the cause of eating disorders is multifactorial.

"Those with low self-esteem and those under serious stress are susceptible," Humphries said. "Others may have personal problems such as with the family or a boyfriend, which can eventually progress into a disorder."

Anorexia victims typically compulsively exercise and severely

restrict daily caloric intake to the point of fasting for days at a time in some cases.

Bulimics practice "binging and purging," which involves eating excessive eating in a short period of time and then throwing up.

The problems associated with the diseases are not minor.

Anorexia has the highest death rate of any psychiatric illness," Humphries said. "The actual percentage of deaths associated with bulimia is not known, but the number is thought to be quite high."

One percent of anorexics will die in their initial battle with the disease, but 18 to 30 percent of the victims who beat the first onset will die from recurring bouts by the age of 45, Humphries said.

Anorexics suffer from loss of hair, osteoporosis (decrease in bone density), problems with poor nutrition and loss of a menstruation cycle for as long as they are restricting food intake.

Bulimics often suffer from electrolyte problems attributed to excessive purging, intestinal and throat tissue damage, and dental erosion.

"Of all the fads which have affected mankind, none seems more difficult to explain than the desire of American women for the

barberpole figure," the late Dr. Morris Fishbein, longtime editor of the Journal of the American Medical Association, once wrote.

"In many ways we have become a 'celebrity culture' where the emphasis is placed on thinness," Humphries said. "Many of the models maintain an unhealthy body weight and image."

When treating eating disorder victims, the medical problems, rather than the psychological ones are treated first. The first step is to ensure that the patient is not suicidal and then if the victim is depressed, anti-depressant medication and nutritional counseling are implemented. Bulimics often abuse alcohol and drugs, so those problems will usually be treated before the actual eating disorder.

Humphries said studies are being done to prove that genetics plays a role in eating disorders.

"It is interesting because just as there are different types of cancers which can be passed down from generation to generation, there are different ideologies regarding eating disorders as well," Humphries said.

"The studies are showing that the genetic link to anorexia has something to do with energy metabolism in victims."

Professor uses old obituaries as window on cultural values of the past

By Jean Buchanan
Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Services

KANSAS CITY, Mo.-- Old Dr. Barry took nothing but whiskey for five days before he died. Still, the story of his death was careful to note that although "his habits of intemperance had reduced him to rags, he retained the manners of a gentleman."

Sophia Stroud, described in her obituary as "Earth's fairest flower," was "taken from us to be transplanted in her heavenly home."

And when yellow fever killed John S. Barrow at age 29, "the fell destroyer came in a moment when he was least expected, and robbed society of one of its brightest ornaments."

These are but a few examples of the old language of death in the United States. To Janice Hume, an

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Assistant journalism professor,
Kentucky State University

suite," said Niles' Weekly Register. "that in all his journeys with the president, he had never seen him so much at home, in a public house, as in captain O'Flinn's, or ever met a man with whom he discoursed more familiarly than with him."

Even a man's similarity to a famous person could merit a note. The obituary for Mr. Lilly compared his experience as a frontiersman with Daniel Boone's.

"It is worthy of remark that this very old man never owned or had a bed in his house," the notice said. It was not worthy of remark to mention Mr. Lilly's first name.

Men who died in the early 19th century were remembered as patriotic, brave, gallant, vigilant, bold, honest, skilled, industrious and devoted to duty.

In the same period women were described as patient, resigned, obedient, affectionate, amiable, pious, gentle, virtuous, intelligent, educated, tender, innocent and useful.

The National Intelligencer in 1818 said Sarah English "chose to be useful rather than gay. Her domestic concerns were managed with the most admirable economy, exhibiting at the same time a degree of comfort and neatness not to be surpassed."

At least English was remembered for her own virtues. Mrs. Albert E. Plant, whose obituary was published in The New York Times in 1910, was listed as the woman "whose husband is the first cousin of the late Henry B. Plant, the railroad and steamship owner."

As early as 1838, said Hume, papers include death notices of women who were nuns, writers or actresses. But most were remembered for their relationships with men.

By the 1930s women started being remembered for their own contributions, she said.

The deaths of black people and American Indians were not often noted in the newspapers, Hume said, unless they provided an opportunity to moralize or the people died in unusual ways.

One black woman was featured because she died when her kerchief caught fire. A black woman slave was remembered because she was obedient to her mistress and many "respectable" women attended her funeral.

While the obituaries of the 19th century focused on the character of the dead person, the 20th century notices were filled with details about the deceased's work and wealth. The abrupt change startled Hume.

In this century the newspapers extolled men who worked right up to the time they died. These items focused on university affiliations, careers and how much wealth these men had amassed.

"It was such a stark contrast between remembering someone for their strong character and remembering someone for the size of his bank account," said Hume. "To see it there reflected in these obituaries, I was really amazed."

She cited an item in the April 7, 1910, New York Times about Joshua Crosby, 82, who had worked at the Custom House since the Civil War and continued working until the Saturday night before he died.

The Times on Jan. 7, 1910, also wrote about Professor Samuel S. Sanford, who was worth several million dollars and worked "from sheer enjoyment."

Ultimately, said Hume, the obituaries showed how Americans valued life, and they celebrated the nation's ideals.

"I'm using obituaries," she said, "as a little window a tiny little window to look at cultural values."

National Campus News Briefs

Ohio freshman dies outside dorm room

ATHENS, Ohio (CPS)--Officials at Ohio University are mystified by the death of 18-year-old Ryan Bommer. Bommer, a freshman from Bryan, Ohio, collapsed outside his dorm-room door.

Friends found Bommer Nov. 9 on the floor. Although Bommer had been taking prescription drugs for an illness, medical personnel ruled out drug- or alcohol-use or even a freak fall as the cause of death. As of press time, an autopsy had been scheduled but not performed, according to Ohio University's press office.

Bommer, a championship high-school golfer, graduated from Bryan High School this past spring with a 3.8 grade-point average.

Heart attack kills wrestler

BUIES CREEK, N.C. (CPS) -- A championship college wrestler at Campbell University died while trying to lose six pounds to make his weight qualification for a meet.

Billy Jack Saylor, 19, of Wellborn, Fla., wrestled at 190 pounds for the university. The night before leaving for a weekend tournament in New York, he weighed in at 201, but had to get down to 195 in order to compete in the tournament, said Benny Pearce, director of public affairs for Campbell.

"We don't know what he was doing, but he was going through some activities," Pearce said.

Saylor collapsed about 4 a.m. Nov. 7 and was pronounced dead an hour later. The state medical examiner said an autopsy indicated the cause of death was a heart attack. "There was no indication that he had any problem" before his death, Pearce said.

Several years ago, a Campbell baseball player collapsed and died while running during a game, Pearce said. The ballplayer's autopsy showed that he died of natural causes.

Saylor was buried Nov. 11 in Florida, with the entire wrestling team and the coach in attendance. In addition, the school held a memorial service on Nov. 13, which included special music, a eulogy by the coach and readings by Campbell's president.

Deal lets students record for free

WASHINGTON (CPS) -- A deal between American University and Waters Edge, a local recording studio, will enable AU students to engineer and record music for free.

That is if their music fits the profile of Waters Edge, which specializes in Christian and "positive" music, said AU spokesman Todd Sedmak.

"It doesn't have to be Christian," he said. "It can be a rap song about, say, honesty or truth."

So far, most of the students interested in the program have been engineers in AU's Audio Technology Program, which draws about 40 majors a year, Sedmak said. While AU students aren't paid, they benefit from the experience, and Waters Edge owner Sandy Harless enjoys the free help. Sedmak added that AU graduates have gone on to behind-the-scenes jobs at PBS, Voice of America and other national media outlets.

Waters Edge, established in 1996, has recorded Christian artists such as Dan Polk and Objects of Mercy. The studio is now negotiating to buy a national record label, and plans to begin building a bigger studio in Maryland in 1998.

DePauw sorority accused of hazing

GREENCASTLE, Ind (UPI) -- A DePauw University sorority is on suspension in the wake of an alleged hazing incident in which pledges suffered cigarette burns on their legs and hips.

The alleged incident took place at the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority and follows by several weeks an incident that left Zeta Beta Tau fraternity chapter at Indiana University on suspension for conducting a racially and sexually tinged treasure hunt.

DePauw campus security officials say the incident at the sorority took place last week. Three pledges suffered burns and one was treated at a hospital and released.

The university said the sorority is cooperating with the investigation but has been suspended until authorities can determine whether any state laws were violated.

Cornell cartoon sparks controversy

ITHACA, N.Y. (CPS) -- A cartoon deemed controversial by black students at Cornell University resulted in the burning of copies of a conservative student paper.

And while a Cornell spokesperson described the burning as a quiet demonstration, Michael Capel, chairman of The Cornell Review, is calling it an act of censorship.

Shaka Davis, a student at Cornell, burned about 50 copies of The Cornell Review in front of a cafeteria, says Jacquie Powers, a Cornell spokeswoman who witnessed the event. The cartoon in question showed three drawings--the Ku Klux Klan, a mob of white supremacists and an abortion doctor--and carried the headline: "Which one of these kills more blacks?"

"It was very quiet; there were never more than 10 people on the scene" of the burning, said Powers.

Last year, the paper published in Ebonics a parody of the school's course offerings in African studies, said Simeon Moss, deputy news service director at Cornell.

Canadian university unveils 'invisible condom'

Substitute for traditional latex found

QUEBEC CITY (Reuters) -- A prototype for an "invisible condom" to help fight HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases was unveiled on Thursday by a Canadian university that hopes to make it available in two years.

Developed over seven years by Laval University's Infectious Diseases Research Center, the new "condom" is in fact a non-toxic polymer-based liquid that solidifies into a gel at body temperature.

A woman or male homosexual partner would apply the liquid to genital or anal parts before a sexual encounter.

Laval said tests showed that the gel formed a water-proof film that

Capel said it's true that students often are offended by his newspaper. But he said it's wrong that the Cornell administration "has created a climate on campus in which newspaper burning is tolerated."

Despite administration assertions that only about 50 copies of the paper were burned, Capel said that "the student [Davis], by his own estimation, took about 400 copies and burned about 150 newspapers."

That would amount to a full distribution run for one area of the campus, he added.

Powers described the incident as one in which both sides' First Amendment rights were carried out successfully. "The paper has a right to publish and (Davis) has the right to protest," she said.

Capel disagreed. "The administration is trying to change an act of censorship to a symbolic issue of free speech," he said.

The paper's editors have taken the case to the university's student adjudicator, Powers added.

dramatically reduced transmission of the HIV virus responsible for AIDS, and could also block the virus responsible for genital herpes.

Laval Infectious Diseases Research Center director Michel Bergeron told a news conference "we developed our 'invisible condom' to protect women who are victim of men who refuse to wear latex."

"We call it invisible because it can be used without telling the partner who doesn't want to use a latex condom," Bergeron said.

Laval plans human clinical tests in the next two years and hopes to market the product through a commercial drug company, pending regulatory approval in Canada and the United States.

assistant journalism professor at Kansas State University, that language offers clues to our cultural values.

For more than a year, Hume pored over death notices in several U.S. newspapers. She read more than 8,000 obituaries as part of the research for her doctoral dissertation at the University of Missouri.

Here's some of what she found:

Obituaries in the 19th century spoke about the person's character; in the 20th century they detailed the person's work and wealth.

In the days when women were valued mainly in their relationships with men, their obituaries were about the men in their lives.

News was news, even then. People who might not ordinarily be featured ended up in the papers because they died in unusual ways or had connections to well-known persons. The obituaries Hume studied from 1910 and 1930 included lots of people who claimed to have witnessed Abraham Lincoln's assassination.

The study focused on three periods: A decade before and a decade after the election of Andrew Jackson in 1828; five years before the Civil War started and five years after it ended; and before and after 1920, when the 19th Amendment was ratified, giving women the right to vote.

Hume used newspapers from New York City, New Orleans, Baltimore, Chicago and San Francisco, along with two early national papers, Niles' Weekly Register and The National Intelligencer.

"An obituary is more than a bareboned recitation of someone's life," Hume said. "It's a commemoration."

In the earliest years, she said, the newspapers wrote obituaries about men who were Revolutionary War heroes, patriots or public servants. Sometimes a death was newsworthy because of whom the dead person knew.

In 1818, Benjamin Walker's obituary referred to him as an aide-de-camp and friend of George Washington. That was "epitaph enough," said The National Intelligencer. "Would you add more?"

Patrick O'Flinn was remembered as a man who kept a public house where Washington often stayed. "It was remarked on a certain occasion, by one of the gentlemen in Washington's