



A Study of Awareness about Anorexia Nervosa –An Eating Disorder among Adolescent Girls (A study of Patna town)

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Abstract : *Anorexia nervosa is an eating disorder that has gained a lot of attention both in the popular media and scientific literature since the last 20 to 25 years. The irony is that in our country where many people do not have enough food to eat, some people do not want to eat despite having enough. The two most common eating disorders- anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa have been described since the time of the ancient Greeks. Anorexia nervosa is characterised by extreme weight loss, distorted body image, and an irrational, almost morbid fear of obesity and weight gain. During adolescence, a period of turbulent sexual and social tensions, teenagers seek*

– and are often expected – to establish separate and independent lives. In the attempt to take change of their lives, some teenagers try to maintain extreme control over their bodies, which promotes anorexia nervosa. The discrepancy between actual and perceived body shape is an important gauge of the severity of the disease. Looking good does not help people deal with anger, depression, low self esteem, or past experiences with sexual abuse. If the issues are behind the disorder and are not resolved as weight is lost, the individual may intensify efforts to lose weight “to look even better” rather than work through unresolved psychological concerns. A combination of many factors as genetic factors, metabolism, personality issues, coping skills, family functioning, psychological issues, the social factors appear to contribute to the risk of anorexia. Treating patients, especially children and adolescents, usually involves a multi-disciplinary team approach. Treatment needs to be individualized depending on the person and family needs. Various treatments that have been suggested for anorexia nervosa include psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, simple supportive therapy, isolation, acupuncture, family therapy, behaviour modification and cognitive therapy. If left untreated, some of the physical effects of anorexia are irreversible.

Key words: *Adolescence, anorexia, eating disorder, bulimia.*

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