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Eating Disorders and Body Dissatisfaction Is Double in Muslim Teenagers Than in Christian, Spanish Study Finds

ScienceDaily (Mar. 8, 2011) — A study conducted at the University of Granada is pioneer in addressing the relationship between religion, eating disorders and body image perception among adolescents. To carry out this study, researchers took a sample of 494 students aged 12-20 years from three public schools in Ceuta, Spain.

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This study was to assess the incidence of eating disorders and body dissatisfaction in a non-clinical sample of adolescents belonging to different religious groups, and assess the relationship between religious affiliation and health disorders.

To carry out this research, the authors examined a sample of 493 students aged between 12 and 20 years from three public schools in Ceuta, including secondary school.

The author of this study, Francisco Javier Ramón Jarne, belongs to the Institute of Neuroscience "Federico Olóriz" of the University of Granada. This research "addresses a subject that has never been studied in Spain before: the relationship between religious affiliation, eating disorders and body image perception. As regards other international studies, this is one of the few comparative studies ever made by religious affiliation (Christian and Muslim) and gender." So far, only one similar study had been developed in Israel with a sample of Christian, Muslim and Jew adolescent girls.

The recent massive migratory movements -- mainly from countries of the Maghrib -- experienced in Spain have transformed the religious affiliation of its population. "This makes the results of this study very interesting from the point of view of preventive medicine and public health," Francisco Javier Ramón Jarne states.

The University of Granada researcher pointed out that "affiliation to the Islamic religion taken as a socio-cultural factor can also be associated to these disorders, even although the thin ideal is not associated to the Islamic culture."

The research carried out by Francisco Javier Ramón Jarne was conducted by professors Manuel Gurpegi Fernández de Legaria and Dolores Jurado Chacón.

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