

EVALUATION OF OBSESSIVE BELIEFS IN ORTHOREXIA NERVOSA

Özge Şahmelikoğlu Onur, Gülşen Teksin, Meryem Gül Teksin Taş, Zeynep Aksu

Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry, Tekirdağ, Türkiye

BACKGROUND AND AIM: Orthorexia Nervosa (ON) is a relatively new concept introduced by Steven Bratman, characterized by an excessive and rigid preoccupation with healthy eating. Although it is not formally classified within current diagnostic systems, increasing evidence suggests that ON shares important cognitive and behavioral features with Obsessive–Compulsive Disorder (OCD). Intrusive thoughts related to food purity, strict dietary rules, and ritualized food preparation and consumption resemble compulsive patterns observed in OCD and often result in significant time consumption, emotional distress, and functional impairment. The present study aimed to examine the prevalence of orthorexia among university students and to investigate its relationship with clinical characteristics and obsessive beliefs.

METHODS: (Ethics Committee Approval must be obtained and the number should be specified). This cross-sectional, descriptive study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University (December 31, 2024; protocol no: 2024.319.12.03). Initially, 124 students were assessed; 28 were excluded due to a history of psychiatric disorders. The final sample consisted of 96 students aged 18–65 years. Participants completed a Sociodemographic Data Form, the Beck Depression

Inventory, Beck Anxiety Inventory, Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire, Eating Attitudes Test, Obsessive Beliefs Questionnaire (OBQ-44), and ORTO-15.

RESULTS: According to the ORTO-15 (cutoff ≤ 40), 66 participants (68.8%) were classified as orthorexic, while 32 (31.2%) were non-orthorexic. Orthorexic participants demonstrated significantly higher obsessive beliefs. Scores on the OBQ-44 subscales—responsibility/threat estimation (54.6 ± 17.7), perfectionism/certainty (65.2 ± 18.9), and importance/control of thoughts (34.0 ± 11.5)—were all significantly higher in the orthorexic group compared with the non-orthorexic group (43.7 ± 15.2 ; 52.2 ± 17.3 ; 26.3 ± 10.7) ($p=0.004$, $p=0.001$, and $p=0.003$, respectively). The OBQ-44 total score was also significantly elevated among orthorexic individuals (154.0 ± 41.3 ; 122.3 ± 39.2) ($p=0.001$).

CONCLUSIONS: These findings support a strong association between orthorexia and obsessive beliefs, reinforcing the conceptualization of ON within the obsessive–compulsive spectrum disorders.

Keywords: Disordered eating, obsessive beliefs, obsessive compulsive disorder, orthorexia nervosa,