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Positive Feedback on Appearance, Value Placed on Appearance, and Need for Approval: Implications for Disordered Eating Behavior Among Undergraduate Females

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Oral Presentation O5.3

POSITIVE FEEDBACK ON APPEARANCE, VALUE PLACED ON APPEARANCE, AND NEED FOR APPROVAL: IMPLICATIONS FOR DISORDERED EATING BEHAVIOR AMONG UNDERGRADUATE FEMALES

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Negative feedback is often cited as a major contributor to unhealthy eating behavior among women. The present study examined whether positive feedback may also be associated with disordered eating behavior among women who place a high value on physical appearance. 109 female undergraduates at Illinois Wesleyan University completed surveys regarding positive appearance-related feedback received, value placed on physical appearance, need for approval, and eating attitudes. Preliminary analyses revealed that amount of positive appearance-related feedback and value placed on appearance were both found to be positively correlated with disordered eating behavior. Furthermore, body mass index was found to be negatively correlated with positive feedback received; in other words, females with a lower body mass received greater positive feedback. Implications for the relationship between positive appearance-related feedback and disordered eating behavior will be discussed. This is particularly important because it contradicts the traditional view that the feedback associated with disordered eating is negative.