

Young people with SBH may be at a higher risk of disordered eating, eating disorders and negative body image



If you know a young person aged 12-26 with SBH who would like to participate, please direct them to our survey

Exploring the extent and nature of disordered eating in adolescents and young adults with spina bifida and hydrocephalus: An interim analysis

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Background

- Young people with spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus (SBH) are thought to be at a higher risk for under- and over-eating.
- However, we lack information on the eating patterns and behaviours of young people with SBH, and how they perceive their body image.
- It is also unknown whether eating patterns, dietary manipulation, and disordered eating behaviours are being identified and addressed in clinic settings.

Purpose

- This study explores the nature, extent, type, and frequency of disordered eating behaviours amongst young people with SBH.
- It also aims to understand their perceptions surrounding their body image.

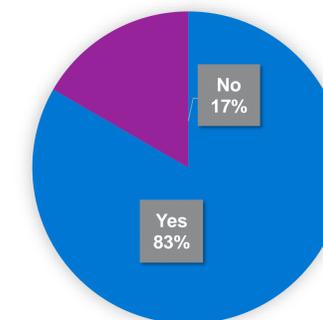
Methods

- Self-report, cross-sectional online survey of young people (aged 12-26) with SBH:
 - Includes validated measures to assess eating behaviours, disordered eating and body esteem;
 - Questions also created by our team addressing eating patterns related specifically to SBH.

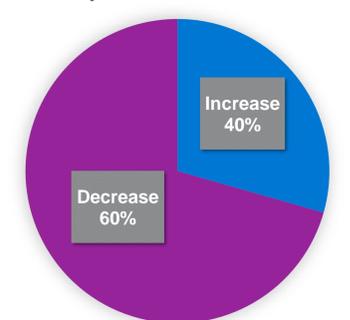
Results (n=16)

- Participants (mean age = 21) identified as non-binary (6%), female (76%), and male (18%).
- Compared with a sample of young people without disabilities, participants showed greater eating, shape, and weight concerns.
- Compared with a sample of children without disabilities attending a paediatric weight loss program, the SBH sample were more likely to engage in emotional eating.
- Healthcare provider discussions could influence behaviour.

Have conversations about your weight with healthcare professionals affected your food intake?



Has this caused you to decrease or increase your food intake?



- Having SBH affected the way some participants viewed their body.

"the beauty standard is able bodied"

"It makes me extremely self conscious"

"I feel really insecure about my body"

"[...] I felt that I wasn't as attractive due to my spina bifida. I have a great dislike for the body parts that have been affected by spina bifida"

Conclusion

- This interim analysis suggests that disordered eating, eating disorders & body image may be important issues in young people with SBH.
- These could potentially be safely addressed in clinical settings but additional training for healthcare providers will likely to be needed.
- Recruitment for the study is ongoing.