



University of Wales
Trinity Saint David
LONDON

Mental Disorders and Psychopathology
BMHP6006
Assessment 1

Supporting paper

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Submission date: 21/08/2023 – 2:00pm

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Definition of Bulimia Nervosa

Bulimia Nervosa is a severe mental condition also known as Bulimia. Anyone, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, or background, can be affected. People with bulimia are trapped in a cycle of consuming enormous amounts of food (known as bingeing), followed by attempts to make up for it by purging—vomiting, using laxatives or diuretics, fasting, or engaging in excessive exercise (Beat, 2022).

Classification within the ICD - 10

Bulimia Nervosa is classified under the Behavioural syndromes associated with physiological disturbances and physical factors, F50-F59 within the ICD-10 manual. Bulimia Nervosa is F50.2.

According to World Health Organisation (2010), Bulimia Nervosa shares many psychological characteristics with anorexia nervosa, such as an obsession with body shape and weight. Vomiting on a regular basis is likely to cause electrolyte imbalances and health difficulties.

Bulimia most commonly affects females and begins throughout adolescence. However, it can also afflict men. Bulimia sufferers are more likely to come from a family history of eating disorders, physical sickness, and other mental health issues. Bulimia patients frequently suffer from other conditions such as substance use disorder, anxiety problems, and mood disorders (Www.hopkinsmedicine.org, 2019).

Data related to Bulimia Nervosa

Bulimia Nervosa affects around 1.5% of females worldwide compared to 0.1% of males and it typically develops in the early adulthood or during youth (MacKey, 2021).

More women than men suffer from bulimia. Women of all races and ethnicities can experience it, and up to 2% of women do. Young women in their early 20s and teen girls between the

ages of 15 and 19 are the most vulnerable. However, older women are more likely to experience eating disorders (Womenshealth.gov, 2018).

Priory Group (2019) as stated that bulimia nervosa affects 40% of those in the UK who has eating disorders, and its average onset age is 18 to 19 years old.

Further studies shows that Bulimia has a weighted crude death rate of 1.74 for every 1000 person-years (Admin, 2022).

Causes of Bulimia Nervosa

The exact cause of bulimia and other eating disorders is unknown. Researchers have discovered that the problem may be caused by a complex interaction of genetic, biochemical, behavioural, psychological, and social variables. This combination comprises a person's biology, their body image and self-esteem, their social experiences, their family history of health, and occasionally other mental health conditions (Womenshealth.gov, 2018). Bulimia is most likely caused by multiple factors.

Symptoms of Bulimia Nervosa

According to NHS (2021), binge eating—eating a lot of food in a short period of time—and purging—getting rid of the extra food—either by forcing oneself to vomit, using laxatives or diuretics, fasting, intense physical activity, or a combination of these—are the main symptoms of bulimia.

- Emotional and Behavioural

Thoughts regarding body weight and shape might even influence how a bulimic feels overall. Mood swings or depression; drinking lots of water or calorie-free drinks; frequently using mouthwash; avoiding former friends and activities. Rituals such as sticking to a particular food, chewing more than necessary, skipping meals or eating little during meals, feeling out of control, abusing laxatives or vomiting, diuretics to try to lose weight, going to the toilet a lot after meals, and excessive exercise (WebMD, 2006).

- Physical

Weight loss or frequent weight changes, despite the fact that many bulimics maintain their current weight; Constipation, bloating, stomach pains, sore throat, tooth damage from stomach acid, swollen hands and feet, poor concentration, muscle weakness, bone pain with exercise, low blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, swollen salivary glands, and irregular periods are some of the symptoms that can affect the bulimics (Harvard Health Publishing, 2014).

Diagnosis of Bulimia Nervosa

Bulimia Nervosa can be diagnosed by physical exam which includes taking measurements for height and weight, checking the skin and nails, monitoring the heart and lungs, examining the abdominal area, and checking vital indicators like temperature, blood pressure, and heart rate.

Also, laboratorial tests that could consist of a complete blood count as well as more specialised tests to examine electrolytes, protein, liver, kidney, and thyroid functioning. Furthermore, the mental health provider or the therapist can request a psychological evaluation. They will likely inquire the patient about their thoughts, feelings and eating habits and may be asked to complete a psychological self-assessment questionnaire.

Other tests, such as X-rays, may be performed to assess bone density, look for stress fractures or fractured bones, or to screen the patient for pneumonia or heart problems. Electrocardiograms can be used to detect anomalies in the heart. Tests may also be done to establish how much energy the patient's body expends, which can aid in nutritional planning (Walden, 2018).

Historical overview and treatments

Purging was a practice. Because people in ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, and Arabia thought that illnesses would be caused by food.

In 1979, British psychiatrist Gerald Russell originally identified bulimia nervosa as a subtype of anorexia. Prior to the second part of the 20th century, little was known about the disorder, but it is now rather widespread (Muhlheim, 2020).

College counselling centres were expanded for counselling services in the 1980's and the treatment such as talk therapy and refeeding were used with the patients with Bulimia Nervosa (Eating Recovery Center, 2022).

Current treatments in the UK

According to NHS (2021), treatment for Bulimia Nervosa takes time however the patient can recover from it by doing guided self-help programme, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), family therapy for children and young people and taking medicine such as Antidepressants combined with self-therapy treatment.

Analyse the positives and negatives of treatments available for Bulimia Nervosa

The positive treatments are: person is given medical stabilisation and is treated by a multidisciplinary team that includes doctors, nurses, counsellors, dieticians, and psychiatrists, the person's everyday activities are cut off, which keeps them from indulging in the harmful eating disorder behaviours.

The negative treatments are: person is shielded from the stresses of everyday life, which prevents them from learning how to deal with stressors effectively once they return home. Although sometimes required, hospital programmes are quite clinical, which might make patients feel uneasy.

Issues in provision, professional support or policy about Bulimia Nervosa

If the person also struggles with drugs, alcohol, or self-harm, the prognosis is even worse. Over a year, CBT and IPT are equally beneficial, while CBT appears to begin working sooner. Some evidence suggests that combining medicine and psychotherapy is more successful than either treatment alone (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2019).

The Mental Health Act 2007 and The Equality Act 2010 are the acts that protect people that suffer from an eating disorder such as Bulimia Nervosa.

Principles of care when working with people with Bulimia Nervosa (NICE)

As stated NICE (2017), it is crucial to be aware that people with bulimia may find it challenging or upsetting to discuss their feelings and concerns with healthcare professionals, employees, and other service users therefore, it is also crucial to treat them with care, dignity, respect, confidentiality, privacy, empathy and, compassion regardless of age, gender, or gender identity (including transgender people), sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, belief, culture, family origin, or ethnicity, where they live and with whom they live, as well as any physical or other mental health problems or disabilities. Healthcare professionals must also be trained and skilled in safeguarding, receive the proper clinical supervision, use standard outcome measures, such as the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire, and be held to a high standard of competence.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Bulimia Nervosa has spread throughout the world. Binge eating precedes compensatory strategies. Bulimia Nervosa patients consistently experience poor self-evaluations and place an undue emphasis on weight and body image. Family members should be on the lookout for opportunities to raise awareness about the value of family meals and a well-balanced diet. To establish a healthy humanity on a global scale, Bulimia Nervosa prevention is required. Bulimia Nervosa is generally treatable, and early intervention has better results.

Useful organisations/websites

Organisations or websites that support and help people with Bulimia Nervosa and their family are Beat: beating eating disorders, Mental Health Foundation and Mind.

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Appendix



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MENTAL DISORDERS
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BMHP6006
ASSESSMENT I

BULIMIA NERVOSA

DEFINITION/KEY POINTS

■ What is Bulimia Nervosa?

Bulimia Nervosa is both an eating disorder and a mental health problem which consists in binge eating (eating a significant amount of food in one sitting) followed by purging (through purposeful vomiting, overexercising, or the use of laxatives/diuretics) (NHS, 2021). Self-evaluation is overly impacted by body image and weight.

■ Classification within the IDC-10

Bulimia Nervosa is classified under the Behavioural syndromes associated with physiological disturbances and physical factors, F50-F59 within the ICD-10 manual. Bulimia Nervosa is F50.2 (World Health Organisation, 2010)

DATA

- Bulimia Nervosa affects 0.5% to 1.0% of young women, with an equitable social-class distribution. Women account for approximately 90% of those diagnosed with bulimia nervosa (Hay and [Claudino](#), 2010).
- Women are 5x more likely to develop bulimia. Bulimia has an average onset age of eighteen, with a 0.3% total prevalence. In terms of gender, bulimia affects 1.5% of women and 0.5% of men, making it five times more common in women ([Withinhealth](#), 2023).
- Later adolescence and young adulthood (ages 15–25) are when symptoms are most severe (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, 2019)
- There are 443,800 people with bulimia nervosa in the UK and it has a 1.74 per 1000 person-year weighted crude mortality rate (MacKey, 2021)

CAUSES - SYMPTOMS - DIAGNOSIS

Causes

- Traumatic life experiences
- Physiological influence
- A family history of eating disorders
- Exposure to an environment focused on body size and dieting ([Withinhealth, 2023](#))
- Having mood swings such as anxiety or tension ([NHS, 2021](#))

Symptoms and Signs

- Emotional and Behavioural
 - Shows extreme concern with body weight and shape
 - Fear of eating in public or with others
 - Disappears after eating, often to the bathroom
- Physical
 - Difficulties concentrating
 - Cavities, or discoloration of teeth, from vomiting
 - Muscle weakness
 - Dry skin ([National Eating Disorders Association, 2018](#))

Diagnosis

- Blood test
- Physical exam
- Psychological Evaluation
- Investigation X-Rays and Electrocardiograms ([Walden, 2018](#))

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND TREATMENTS

- In ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, and Arabia, purging was a practice because they believed that diseases would come from the food ([Muhlheim, 2020](#))
- Bulimia nervosa was first defined in 1979 by British psychiatrist Gerald Russell as a "chronic phase of anorexia nervosa" in which patients overeat and then utilise compensatory methods such as self-induced vomiting, laxatives, or protracted periods of deprivation ([Castillo and Weiselberg, 2017](#)).
- In the 1980's, college counselling centres were expanded for counselling services
- Treatments such talk therapy and refeeding were used with patients ([Eating Recovery Center, 2022](#))

CURRENT TREATMENTS IN THE UK (NHS)

- Dieting
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Family Therapy for children and young people
- Guided self-help programme
- Medicine such as Antidepressants combined with self-therapy treatment (NHS, 2021)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Many females between the ages of 15 and 25 are affected by the eating disorder and mental disease known as bulimia nervosa, or simply "bulimia." Exposure to an environment that focuses on physical appearance and diets, with behavioural, emotional, and emotional symptoms, is one of the causes of this mental disorder. The blood and urine tests will determine how serious the illness is.
- According to WebMD Editorial Contributors (2021), is recommended exercises for the body like yoga, tai chi, and dancing which will aid bulimics in overcoming their issues with body image. Another recommendation for controlling the binge-and-purge cycles is to reprogram the way the brain works.

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