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Eating Disorders, Cyclothymic Temperament and Depression: a Cross-sectional Study On 107 Tunisian Students

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Introduction: The eating disorders (ET) seem more and more common. These disorders are multifactorial. Several risk factors have been studied in literature. However, the link with the temperament, biological basis of personality and depression are scarce.

Aims: The estimation of the prevalence of ET, cyclothymic temperament (CT) and depression among medical students and the assessment the relationship between these three parameters.

Methods: This is a descriptive transversal and analytical study involving one hundred and seven students from the Faculty of Medicine of Sfax. The study was conducted using the EAT (Eating Attitude Test 40) for the evaluation of ET, extract TEMPS -A (Temperament Evaluation of the Memphis, Pisa, Paris, and San Diego Auto - questionnaire) to evaluate the CT and Beck scale (BDI: Beck depression Inventory), allowing depression detection.

Results: The mean age was 21.08 years. Around two-thirds of the students were females, 60.7 %. The ET-prevalence was 13.1 %. Nearly half of the students (46.7%) were depressed at the time of the survey, five (4.7%) presented severe depression cases. The prevalence of CT was 44.9%. We found a significant correlation between the presence of CT and both ET and depression disorders according to both dimensional and categorical approaches. An association was found between depression and ET

Conclusion: In our population, the prevalence of depression and the ET is important. The CT was associated with these two disorders, which requires the multiplication of students surveyed, to know the prevalence of this disorder better and search for psychiatric comorbidities and risk factors.