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Argyrides, Marios

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Editorial for the Special Thematic Section on “Body Image and Disordered Eating in Cyprus” of the European Journal of Counseling Psychology

Marios Argyrides^{*a}

[a] Neapolis University Pafos, Paphos, Cyprus.

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Handling Editor: Marios Argyrides, Neapolis University Pafos, Paphos, Cyprus

*Corresponding author at: 2 Danaes Av., 8042, Pafos, Cyprus. E-mail: m.argyrides.1@nup.ac.cy



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Dear Reader,

Both body image as a construct and eating disorders as diagnoses are complex and multidimensional. Therefore, their continuous research and in-depth assessment is a necessity in order to better understand both. Additionally, research is indicating that some regions are more at-risk than others for the development of body image concerns and disordered eating. One of these regions is Cyprus. It has been previously supported that Cyprus is of significant interest in the body image and disordered eating literature for four main reasons: (a) Cyprus has experienced a great financial boost a few years after the Turkish invasion in 1974 which resulted in an “unwritten culture” where an emphasis was placed on the external image being portrayed by the citizens. This was translated into building larger houses, buying expensive cars, designer clothes, etc., emphasizing the image externally portrayed, inevitably extending to body image as well; (b) the year-round warm weather of Cyprus allows for lighter clothing to be worn, therefore, making it more difficult to cover possible physical imperfections. This inevitably results in people being more cautious of these imperfections and investing more in their appearance; (c) Previous research in Cyprus has shown that the number of adolescents with disordered eating is significantly greater than almost all countries assessed in the literature and (d) the school curriculum minimally addresses these topics and the curriculum hours have decreased even more the last few years. Additionally, no significant prevention efforts have ever been recorded in Cyprus.

Therefore, the need for a special section addressing the issues of body image and eating disorders in Cyprus was deemed necessary. A call for papers was announced to researchers in the field asking them to submit original research papers with data pertaining to Cyprus. The final section includes eight total original research papers. Two large sample epidemiological studies are included in this special section so that they can enrich the literature in Cyprus, since only one was available up until now. Additionally, in order to further support the significance of Cyprus in the body image and eating disorder literature, an original research study comparing Cyprus

to six other European countries is included. Moreover, the special section includes two original research articles assessing body image across the life span in Cyprus and the effects of family dynamics on disordered eating. In order to further enrich the literature from the perspective of the professionals working with individuals with eating disorders in Cyprus, a qualitative research article is included addressing these perspectives. Finally, since the psychometric tools addressing several psychological constructs are not easily found in the Greek language, the section includes the validation of two instruments assessing body image in Greek.

I hope that you will find these eight articles of value and that they will further guide research in Cyprus.

Sincerely,

Marios Argyrides, PhD

Guest Editor of Special Thematic Section “Body Image and Disordered Eating in Cyprus”