**Drunkorexia (Course 1: Other eating disorders)**

The chapter introduced a concept of *orthorexia*, which is not yet identified and described by diagnostic manuals for professionals but increasing in professional discussions and recognition. Another term, *drunkorexia*, is used in some treatment circles, particularly in the context of college student wellness. This exercise can be used in classes to introduce a topic that should be of interest to students and as a topic that illustrates the rise in new disorder and diagnosis terminology.

**Information for instructors and/or students:**

**Drunkorexia** is a condition where – usually older adolescents or younger adults – restrict calories to account for calories consumed during alcohol consumption (Burke, Cremeens, & Vail-Smith, 2010). Recognized on college campuses, drunkorexia is a term used among professionals interested in student development. It has not received nearly the attention of orthorexia from eating disorder experts, though research in consumption journals has emerged in the past 5 years (e.g., Lupi, Martinotti, & Giannantonio, 2017). Hunt and Forbush (2016) explicitly posed the question to eating experts of whether drunkorexia is an eating disorder, substance abuse disorder, or something altogether separate. They found that drunkorexia in women was more linked to eating disorders while drunkorexia in men was more linked to substance abuse disorders. Purging and binging scales yielded scores associated with participants’ drunkorexia behaviors, but body dissatisfaction was not part of the drunkorexia tendencies, a point of differentiation between drunkorexia and anorexia nervosa. Another conclusion was that college students who engage in behaviors indicative of drunkorexia are at higher risk of developing eating disorders and substance abuse disorders later in life. Be on the lookout for more research and information about this potential eating disorder and its impact. Even if it never reaches ICD status, it may have value as an OSFED type or as a risk factor for other disorders.

Burke, SC, Cremeens, J, Vail-Smith, K, et al. (2010) Drunkorexia: Calorie restriction prior to alcohol consumption among college freshman. *Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education*, *54*(2), 17–34.

Hunt, TK, Forbush, KT (2016) Is “drunkorexia” an eating disorder, substance use disorder, or both? *Eating Behaviors*, *22*, 40–45.

Lupi, M., Martinotti, G., & Di Giannantonio, M. (2017). Drunkorexia: an emerging trend in young adults. *Eating and Weight Disorders-Studies on Anorexia, Bulimia and Obesity*, *22*(4), 619-622.

**Idea for class exercise and discussion:**

Show one or more of the following videos to students or assign one of the videos for students to watch.

* ThinkTank (2011): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rufU-DIJnyA>
* CBS News (2016): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igOF4TvP-G0>
* NBC News (2016): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jaQKa0OrC3I>
  + These are brief descriptions geared towards a layperson audience.
  + Introduces the topic, raises conversations about purpose, prevalence, and dangers.
  + What cultural elements do you think promote drunkorexia? (These videos are from the USA.)
* The Farley Center (2017): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qFihRyXoVBk>
  + Introduces ideas of disordered behavior that spans multiple classifications.
  + This is a good primer or review of various disordered eating symptoms.

Open and manage a class discussion about drunkorexia. Potential conversation starters:

* Ask students if they have observed this behavior, any prior knowledge they had of this term or behavior trend, and whether they view it as problematic.
* Challenge them to consider factors that make some young adults more or less likely to participate in drunkorexia behaviors. What can college campuses do to help?
* Ask students whether they view drunkorexia as a problem of enough significance to warrant its own inclusion/classification in the ICD or DSM. What questions do they have about the development and validation of new disorders?

**Additional Resources:**

Kershaw, S. (2008). Starving themselves, cocktail in hand. *New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/02/fashion/02drunk.html>

Pompili, S., & Laghi, F. (2020). Drunkorexia: Disordered eating behaviors and risky alcohol consumption among adolescents. *Journal of health psychology*, *25*(13-14), 2222-2232.