

# Is Society to blame For Anorexia

Anorexia nervosa is a life-threatening eating disorder defined by refusal to maintain body weight. Other essential features of this disorder include an intense fear of gaining weight, a distorted body image, and an absence of at least three consecutive menstrual cycles (amenorrhoea) when otherwise expected to occur in women. Sometimes people starve and binge, depending on the extent of weight loss. This can be physically very dangerous.

The argument I plan to make is if anorexia is caused by pressures made on mainly young woman to look perfect by society. Many people feel people affected by anorexia are trying to fulfil a culturally imposed ideal body image, which stresses thinness. Many anorexics restrict their daily intake to 1,000 calories or less. Most avoid fattening high calorie foods and eliminate red meat or meat altogether. The diet of persons with anorexia may consist almost completely of low calorie vegetables.

Anorexia nervosa is the third most common chronic illness in adolescent girls and is estimated to occur in 0.5% to 3% of all teenagers. Anorexia mainly occurs in young adolescent girls but over the past 40 years it has increased 3 times in young adult women. 90% of reported cases of anorexia are in women, but the rate in men appears to be increasing, as men are more likely to conceal eating disorder than woman.

Many things can trigger anorexia such as low self-esteem, biochemical factors psychiatric disorders, social and culture pressures, family pressures, genetic predisposition. People with anorexia tend to be perfectionists. They also often lack a sense of identity. Movies, TV, and magazines tend to send out the advantages of being thin. Females who are thin are not rejected, but instead are considered glamorous and sexy. They tend to live in a fantasyland where life is perfect if you are thin.

Many people argue that society is to blame for anorexia in adolescent girls and boys. On TV we see people who are rich, beautiful, and above all are thin. They see these people and think if they were thin they too would be rich, and beautiful, people would like them. Eating disorders are seen primarily in western and industrialised countries, where slimness is a model of attractiveness. Some experts feel that the causes of anorexia are relative to demands from society and family. For many anorexics, the destructive cycle begins with the pressure to be thin and attractive. A poor self-image compounds the problem. Often anorexia starts when a teenager or young woman goes on a diet to lose a little weight. Spurred on by the compliments they get, they may become obsessed with dieting. They may think to themselves. "If losing a little weight is good, losing a lot must be great." People with anorexia typically have low self-esteem.

and are easily that being thin would give them all the confidence in the world.

Many anorexics accept anorexia as a way of life and this is how you become popular and loved. Many fashion models are anorexic due to pressure put on them to look thin. Then young teenagers see these stylish skinny models and feel this is acceptable to do what ever is necessary to look like these models on covers of magazines and on the cat walks. On the Internet, website are widely available which encourage anorexia. They show pictures of models, which have been altered. Their limbs have been made longer and shadows created underneath their ribs to make them look even thinner. Some people who have anorexia become obsessed with getting fit and continuously exercise but don't replace energy lost in the body, therefore the body uses the muscle and soon it deteriorates and the person becomes weak, just so they can be thin. **Many famous people have been affected by anorexia. One in particular was Karen Carpenter who was one of the first public cases know. She felt pressurised by her job as a singer to look thin and beautiful so she starved herself. Karen Carpenter died February 4, 1983 of heart failure caused by chronic anorexia nervosa. She was thirty-two years old. She battled with it from 1975-1983 (when she died). She went to New York at the end of 1981 for a year of treatment by a psychiatrist but the damage had apparently been done. Plus, you can't beat anorexia with an hour in a doctor's office. She remained obsessed--or trapped--by it. She was an extreme case and she fought to overcome the disease throughout the last two years of her life but she couldn't or she just simply ran out of time. Her body couldn't take anymore. She'd been starving herself for seven years, using laxatives, drinking water with lemon, taking dozens of thyroid pills daily, and even throwing up.**

<http://www.hotshotdigital.com/WellAlwaysRemember.2/KarenCarpenter.html>

Also recently Lena Zavaroni died because of anorexia. She was a child star and from the early age of 14 she battled with anorexia but eventually she died last year (2000), because it completely took over her life. Her manager controlled Lena's life. And pressure from him, and other executives, to look perfect, so she would be successful meant Lena went to any lengths to achieve this. Unfortunately Lena became anorexic due to these pressures, and she was one of many whose battle with anorexia ended in death. In the eyes of the parents and loved one's of people who have anorexia, the media and magazines and advertisements have a lot to answer for. Recently a father who's daughter died of anorexia sued a magazine for causing his daughter to become so obsessed with being thin she became anorexic and died.

On the other hand many would argue that a magazine couldn't be held responsible for someone becoming anorexic anorexia nervosa is a psychological disorder. So it is how that person reacts to the pictures or articles in a magazine. The magazine does not purposely set out to promote anorexia therefore is not to blame. Many experts feel that pressure from the parents towards their children to achieve highly in exams is one of the factors of anorexia. There is an increased risk in families in which there are other anorexics and this probably indicates a genetic factor also. Some studies of anorexia nervosa have indicated problems with the system that controls the

production of cortisol (a steroid hormone) by the adrenal gland. Although no one cause of anorexia has been identified, some evidence points to a dysfunction in the brain, which regulates certain metabolic processes.

Although no one knows exactly why some people develop eating disorders, research indicates that it's probably due to a combination of several factors. These include personality traits, anorexics tend to be perfectionists, and the nature of the family and home environment they often come from families who have a lot of emphasis on looks, demand perfection or don't allow negative feelings such as anger to be expressed in the home. Social forces, including the emphasis on women to look thin, are also thought to play a role. The causes are inconclusive and the causes may vary. In an attempt to understand scientists have studied the personality, genetics, environments, and biochemistry of people with anorexia. But unfortunately it is very hard to help those with anorexia although treatment is available. Sometimes it can cure a person or not help at all.