

Bodybuilders have distorted body image

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Welsh researchers who studied "gym rats" say many of those who use steroids seem to suffer from body image problems similar to those of anorexics.

"Sufferers of negative or heightened body image issues will go to extremes to meet their desired goals, and doctors need to be more aware of the efforts 'bigorexics' will go to to achieve their goals," said Bruce Davies of the University of Glamorgan.

Davies said that for some men the pursuit of big muscles has become almost a cult. He found that women are not immune either.

In a study of 200 regular gym goers in South Wales, Davies and his colleagues found that almost all used steroids. They found that 10 percent used diuretics, 10 percent thyroxin, 14 percent insulin, 22 percent tamoxifen, 24 percent growth hormone and 44 percent ephedrine.

Davies said the body-builders have the mirror-image of anorexia. While anorexics who have become dangerously thin see a fat person when they look in the mirror, the bigorexics see "a small thin person."

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