

France to fine those encouraging anorexia

April 2 2015

Inciting people to extreme thinness could be punishable by a year in prison and a fine of 10,000 euros (\$11,000) in France after MPs voted Thursday to take aim at "pro-anorexia" websites.

Deputies voted through an amendment to a law on [public health](#) that would punish anyone "provoking people to excessive thinness by encouraging prolonged dietary restrictions that could expose them to a danger of death or directly impair their health."

Up to an estimated 40,000 people suffer from anorexia in France, nine out of 10 of them women and girls.

The law is designed to take aim at so-called "pro-Ana" sites accused of encouraging excessive thinness.

The two deputies that proposed the amendment, Maud Olivier and Catherine Coutelle, said that "certain sites known as 'pro-Ana' can push people into a vicious circle of anorexia and authorities cannot do anything about it."

The new law is "necessary" and "will not call into question the idea of freedom of expression on the Internet."

Anorexia nervosa is usually a [chronic illness](#) that affects nearly one percent of people. It is typically diagnosed in young women aged 15-19.

It has one of the highest mortality rates of a psychiatric

disorder—between six and 11 percent—and is among the most difficult to treat, doctors say.

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Citation: France to fine those encouraging anorexia (2015, April 2) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-04-france-fine-anorexia.html>

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