

Evidence lacking for screening for eating disorders

October 19 2021



(HealthDay)—The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)

concludes that the evidence for screening adults and adolescents for eating disorders is currently inadequate for assessing the benefits and harms. These findings form the basis of a draft recommendation statement published online Oct. 19 by the USPSTF.

Cynthia Feltner, M.D., M.P.H., from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Evidence-based Practice Center in Research Triangle Park, and colleagues conducted a systematic review of the evidence on the benefits and harms of screening adults and adolescents for eating disorders and examined the accuracy of screening tools. The researchers found that none of the studies directly assessed the benefits and harms of screening. The accuracy of screening questionnaires was examined in 17 studies. The SCOFF questionnaire (cut point ≥ 2) had a pooled sensitivity and specificity of 84 and 80 percent, respectively, for detecting any [eating disorder](#) among adults. In one study enrolling adolescents, the SCOFF questionnaire (cut point ≥ 2) had sensitivity and specificity of 73 and 78 percent, respectively. All other screening questionnaires were assessed with only one study. Forty trials assessed interventions among populations with recently detected or previously untreated eating disorders; none included a population with screen-detected eating disorders.

Based on these findings, the USPSTF concludes that the current evidence is inadequate for evaluating [screening](#) for eating [disorders](#) among adults and adolescents (I statement). The balance of benefits and harms cannot be determined based on the evidence currently available.

The draft recommendation statement and evidence review have been posted for public comment. Comments can be submitted from Oct. 19 through Nov. 15, 2021.

More information: [Draft Evidence Review](#)
[Draft Recommendation Statement](#)

[Comment on Recommendation Statement](#)

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