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Bigorexia sexuality and anxiety: A new invisible Addiction?

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Muscle Dysmorphia or Reverse Anorexia is categorized as an Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, related to body image and appearance perspective, but clinical experiences suggest that it could be strongly associated to a behavioral addiction. People who suffering from this disorder, especially men, need to follow a strict diet, a daily exercise routine in the gym, sacrificing family and social relationships, work commitments and general health, to look bigger and muscular. Along with the advent of fit models on social media, this disease has spread in the wealthy western Countries, but hardly diagnosed in time. Patients are turning to specialists when significant and specific symptoms come up, such as sexual or anxiety problems. Following these experiences, we wanted to describe the phenomena in Italy, analyzing the influence of media and peer pressure on the developing of bigorexia and its relationship with sexual behavior and anxiety. One thousand and eight hundred gym male goers (aged 18-40), have been administered with a set of

questionnaires: a general questionnaire of training and dieting behaviors, MDDI to evaluate bigorexia, SATAQ-4 for peers and media pressure; SPIN to evaluate anxiety; MSCCQ for sexual self- concept, and CPQ evaluating Cyberpornography addiction. We found that the group who already has o is at high risk of developing bigorexia training more ours, following a specific diet to gain muscles, use drugs and supplements. Moreover, they have been found to have social anxiety and to be more susceptible to peer and media pressure to lose weight and look muscular. Finally, they have been found having (or been at high risk of developing) cyberpornography addiction, and significantly score lower on 14 subscales of the Multidimensional Sexual Self-Concept Questionnaire (MSSCCQ). We discuss clinical and research implications, with a focus on the influences of Social Media in the developing of Muscle Dysmorphia.

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