

A Comprehensive Literature Review of Eating Disorders in LGBTQ+ College-Aged Individuals



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Background Information:

Eating disorders, as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, are classified as “being a persistent disturbance of eating or eating-related behavior that results in the altered consumption or absorption of food and that significantly impairs physical health or psychosocial functioning,” (American Psychological Association, 2013). A study conducted in 2019 found that LGBTQ+ college-aged individuals were at a higher risk of reporting the development of an eating disorder or disordered eating behaviors (Rankin et al.). Furthermore, a study conducted by VanKim et al. in 2016 found that the sexual identification of LGBT college students was a stressor that negatively impacted their eating habits. However, existing literature contains discrepancies in symptomatology and treatment for those within this population suffering from disordered eating behaviors. A systematic literature review is required to fill these gaps in current research and promote best practices for future treatment and intervention.

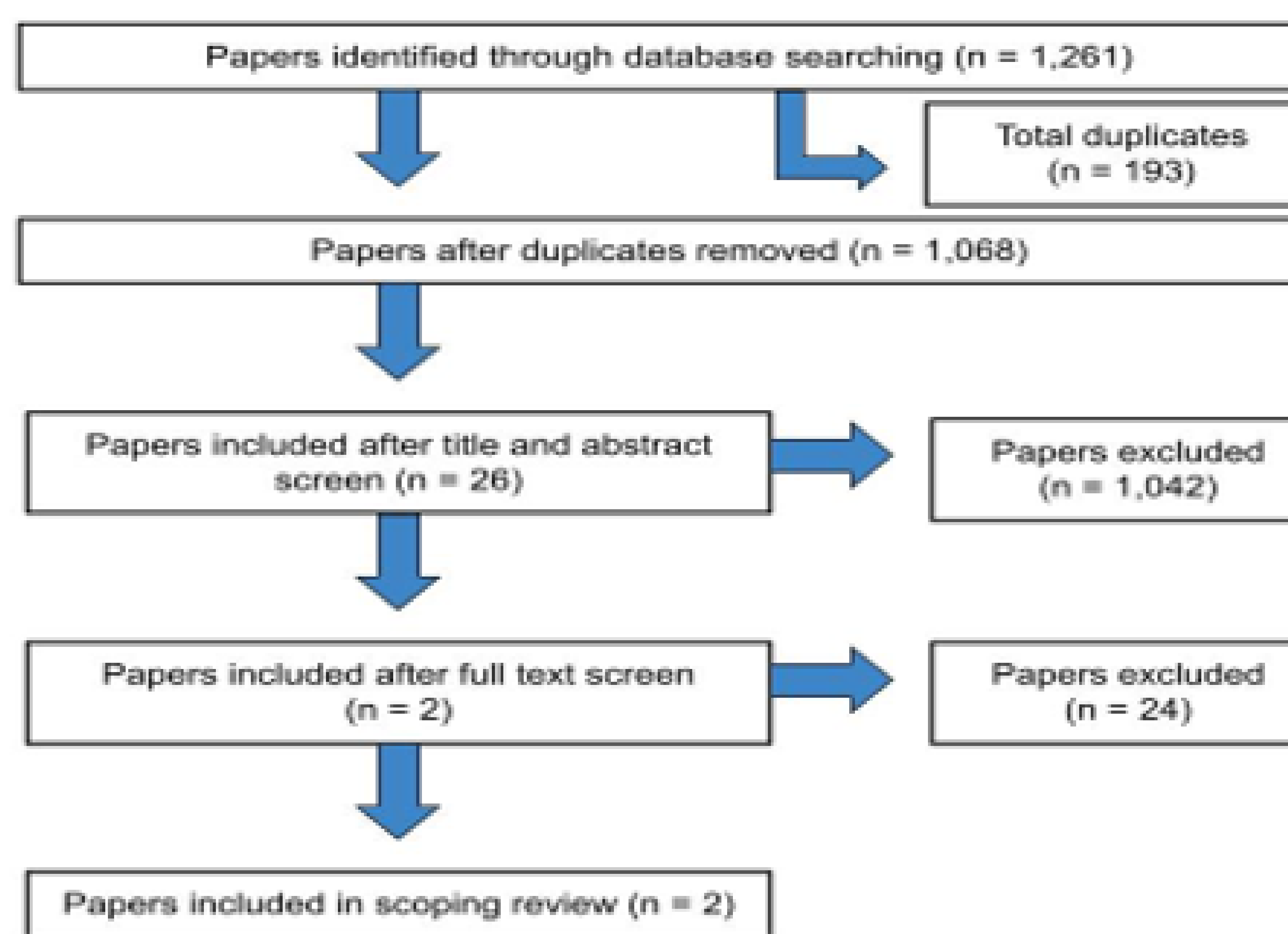
Research Questions:

- How do interventions intersect with ED/DEB symptomatology in college-aged LGBTQ individuals?
- What does the current literature say about ED/DEB in other college-aged groups (college-aged athletes, college-aged racial/ethnic minorities)?

Methods:

In this study, we conducted a systematic literature review composed of a primary and secondary screening. The primary screening was conducted using a primary and secondary keyword search. The primary keyword search contained more broad terms regarding our research question such as “disordered eating behavior”, “LGBTQ” and “college students”. Following this primary keyword search we conducted a secondary keyword search that contained more specific terms such as “disordered eating habit”, “Binge Eating Disorder” and “lesbian”. These terms were put into library databases such as Social Science Premium Collection, GenderWatch, Sociological Abstracts, and other relevant databases containing information relevant to eating disorders in LGBTQ+ populations.

Results:



Discussion:

- One source suggested that college students enjoy when diverse body images and characteristics are represented because these depictions help them to feel less alone in their own body images (Ciao et al., 2018).
- In one study, the PRIDE Body Project©, an eating disorder prevention program for gay men, decreased body dissatisfaction and other ED symptomatology even after follow up periods were evaluated (Brown, 2014).

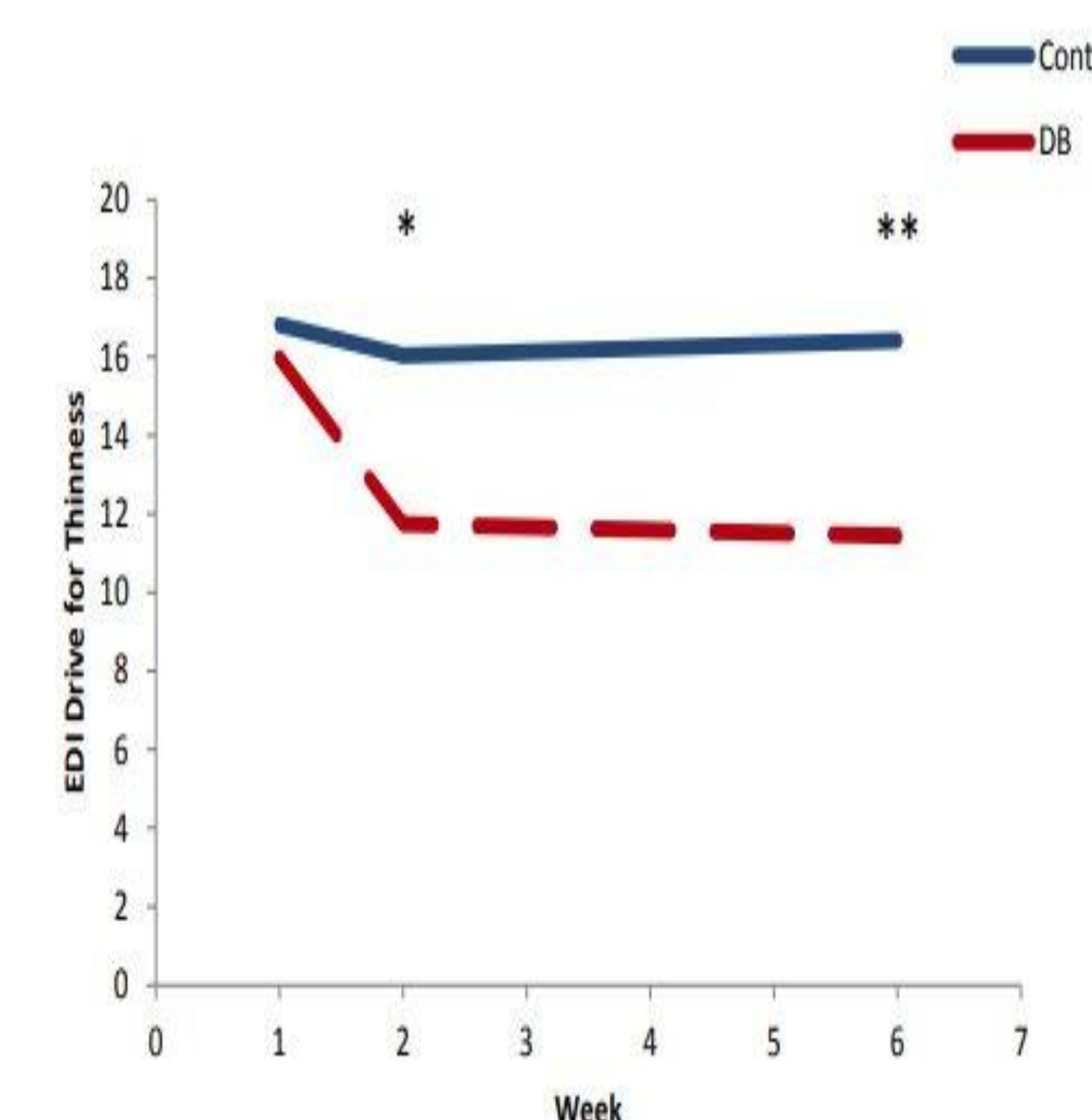


Figure 5. Comparing Conditions over Time on EDI Drive for Thinness Scores

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

- Due to the little results found though this literature review, more research needs to be conducted concerning this issue.

References:

