

Cross-cultural examination of beliefs about the causes of bulimia nervosa among Australian and Japanese females

[Rachel Dryer PhD](#), [Yuri Uesaka PhD](#), [Emmanuel Manalo PhD](#), [Graham Tyson PhD](#)

First published: 06 March 2014

<https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.22269>

Citations: [2](#)

ABSTRACT

Objective

To identify similarities and differences in beliefs about the causes of Bulimia Nervosa (BN) held by Asian (Japanese) women and Western (Australian) women, and hence, to examine the applicability of belief models of eating disorders (ED) across different cultures.

Method

Four hundred three Japanese and 256 Australian female university students (aged 17–35 years) completed a questionnaire that gauged beliefs about the causes of BN.

Results

Among the Australian women, the four-component structure of perceived causes (dieting and eating practices, family dynamics, socio-cultural pressure, and psychological vulnerability) found in Dryer et al. (2012) was replicated. Among the Japanese women, however, a three-component structure (without the psychological vulnerability component) was obtained. The groups also differed in the causal

component they most strongly endorsed, that being socio-cultural pressure for the Australian women, and dieting and eating practices for the Japanese women.

Discussion

The Japanese participants were found to endorse three out of the four Western-based causal explanations for BN, but the relative importance they placed on those explanations differed from that of the Australian participants. Further research is needed, particularly to establish whether Japanese women simply fail to see psychological vulnerability as a viable cause of BN, or there are in fact cultural differences in the extent to which such vulnerability causes BN. © 2014 Wiley Periodicals, Inc. (Int J Eat Disord 2015; 48:176–186)