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Research Themes Associated With Public Attention and Scholarly Impact in Feeding and Eating Disorders

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Seongjoon Kang: methodology, software, formal analysis, validation, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing.

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ABSTRACT

Publications attracting public attention are not necessarily those achieving high scholarly impact, yet little is known about how public and academic audiences engage with feeding and eating disorder research. This study compared publications receiving high public attention and scholarly impact among publications indexed under the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) term "Feeding and Eating Disorders" in PubMed between 2014-2023. Public attention was assessed using Altmetric Attention Scores (AAS), and scholarly impact was measured using citations per year (CPY). The 20 highest-ranked publications by each metric were compared in terms of MeSH term profiles and thematic focus. A total of 13,175 publications were identified. Core MeSH terms, including humans, female, male, adult, feeding and eating disorders, and anorexia nervosa, were common to both groups, whereas adolescent, young adult, and COVID-19 appeared only among publications receiving high public attention. Publications attracting public attention frequently focused on socially visible and timely issues, whereas highly cited publications more often contributed to epidemiological evidence and understanding of biological and psychological mechanisms. These findings suggest that public and academic audiences prioritise different aspects of feeding and eating disorder research. Considering both public attention and scholarly impact may improve understanding of how scientific evidence enters public discourse.

Keywords: Feeding and Eating Disorders, Altmetric Attention Score, Scholarly Impact, Research Communication, Public Engagement, Health Communication

INTRODUCTION

As digital communication continues to evolve, alternative indicators such as the Altmetric Attention Score (AAS) have become increasingly important for evaluating the societal reach of scientific publications (Borgohain et al., 2024; Ortega, 2018). These metrics capture how research is disseminated and discussed across a range of online platforms, including news media, blogs, policy documents, Wikipedia, and social media. In contrast to traditional citation-based metrics, which primarily reflect scholarly influence, attention-based indicators provide insight into the visibility and engagement that research generates beyond academic communities (Elmore, 2018; García-Villar, 2021). Such perspectives are particularly relevant in feeding and eating disorder research, a field that is closely connected to public awareness, health communication, and societal attitudes toward body image, nutrition, and mental health.

Despite growing interest in alternative metrics, relatively little is known about how public attention aligns with scholarly impact in feeding and eating disorder research (Karimipour et al., 2020). Studies that attract substantial public interest may not necessarily be those that exert the greatest academic influence, and vice versa (Brenninkmeijer, 2022). Examining these differences may provide valuable insight into the types of research that resonate with the public, those that shape scientific understanding, and the extent to which these forms of influence overlap.

Therefore, this study examined differences between publications attracting substantial public attention and those achieving high scholarly impact in feeding and eating disorder research over the past decade (2014–2023). By comparing the thematic characteristics of publications valued by public and academic audiences, this study contributes to understanding how health research gains visibility and engages different audiences within contemporary communication environments.

METHODS

Literature Search and Study Selection

A literature search was conducted in PubMed to identify publications related to feeding and eating disorders published between January 1, 2014, and December 31, 2023. The search used the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) term "Feeding and Eating Disorders" (Unique ID: D001068) and its associated entry terms (Wang et al., 2021). This MeSH category encompasses a broad range of conditions characterised by disturbances in eating behaviours, appetite, and food intake. Only peer-reviewed journal articles published in English were included. Publications without a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) were excluded, as DOI information was required to obtain both AAS and citation data.

Public and Academic Impact Assessment

Public attention was assessed using AAS, and academic impact was measured using citations per year (CPY) (Chi & Cushman, 2020). AAS is a metric that quantifies the attention received by scholarly publications across a range of online sources, including news outlets, blogs, policy documents, Wikipedia, and social media platforms (Araujo et al., 2021). The score is generated using a weighted algorithm that accounts for differences in the type and reach of each source and is commonly visualised using the Altmetric "donut," in which colors represent different sources of attention and the central number represents the overall score.

AAS values were retrieved for each publication using its DOI through the rcrossref package in R (version 4.4.2; R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria). Citation counts were obtained from Crossref, and CPY was calculated by dividing the total number of citations by the number of years since publication. This metric was used to assess academic impact while accounting for differences in publication year.

Data Management, MeSH Term Analysis, and Article Ranking

Records retrieved from PubMed were imported into Zotero for organisation, metadata verification, and data management (Mueen Ahmed & Dhubaib, 2011). Following eligibility screening, DOI information was extracted for all included publications. AAS values were retrieved using the rcrossref package in R, and citation counts were obtained from Crossref. CPY was subsequently calculated for each publication. The resulting AAS and CPY data were merged with the publication records and used to rank publications according to public attention and academic impact.

MeSH terms assigned to all included publications were extracted for thematic analysis. MeSH term analysis was performed using VOSviewer (version 1.6.20; Leiden University, Leiden, the Netherlands) (Arruda et al., 2022; Van Eck & Waltman, 2023). A minimum occurrence threshold of 500 was applied to identify the most frequently represented MeSH terms. Occurrence indicates the number of publications in which a MeSH term appeared. Total link strength represents the sum of co-occurrence link strengths between a given MeSH term and all other terms in the network, reflecting the overall connectivity of that term within the MeSH term network. VOSviewer was also used to identify thematic clusters based on patterns of MeSH term co-occurrence.

To examine differences between public attention and scholarly impact in feeding and eating disorder research, publications were ranked separately according to AAS and CPY. The 20 articles with the highest AAS and the 20 articles with the highest CPY were identified. Articles appearing in both rankings were recorded. In addition, the research topics and characteristics of the top-ranked publications were reviewed qualitatively. MeSH terms assigned to articles in each ranking were extracted and summarised separately. To facilitate comparison of thematic profiles, only MeSH terms appearing in at least five articles within

either ranking were included in the comparative analysis. The occurrence and total link strength of these frequently represented MeSH terms were compared between the two groups to identify similarities and differences in thematic focus.

RESULTS

Literature Search and Study Selection

The flowchart in **Figure 1** outlines the process of screening and selecting pertinent publications. A total of 32,369 records were retrieved from PubMed using the "Feeding and Eating Disorders" MeSH term and associated entry terms (MeSH Unique ID: D001068). Limiting the search to publications from January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2023 reduced the number to 13,416 records, of which 13,175 remained eligible after excluding 241 studies without a DOI.

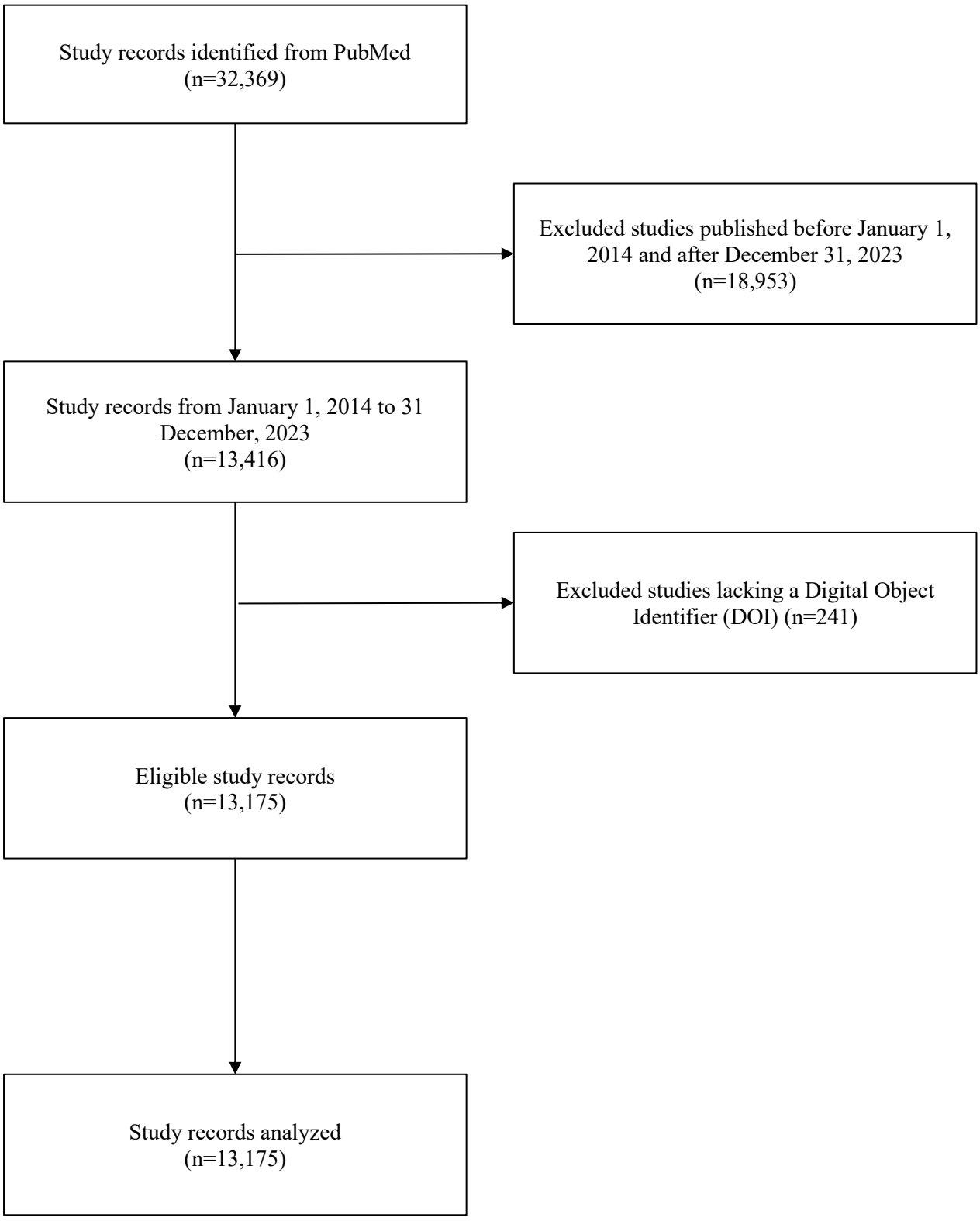
MeSH Term Frequency and Connectivity

In this analysis of 13,175 studies, 5,112 unique MeSH terms were identified, 38 of which met the minimum occurrence threshold of 500 (**Table 1**). The most frequently occurring MeSH terms were humans (12,916), female (8,746), feeding and eating disorders (7,452), adult (5,457), and male (5,241). The MeSH terms with the highest total link strengths were humans (68,270), female (56,075), feeding and eating disorders (41,698), adult (38,669), and male (36,432). Among the included MeSH terms, those with the lowest occurrences were animals (512), reproducibility of results (521), self report (522), self concept (539), and psychometrics (540). The MeSH terms with the lowest total link strengths were animals (1,563), cognitive behavioural therapy (3,446), retrospective studies (3,613), comorbidity (3,938), and reproducibility of results (4,157).

In addition to term frequency and connectivity, six thematic clusters were identified through MeSH term co-occurrence analysis. Cluster 1 was primarily composed of population characteristics and epidemiological concepts, including Humans, Female, Male, Child, Adolescent, Cross-Sectional Studies, Risk Factors, Prevalence, Retrospective Studies, and Comorbidity. Cluster 2 focused on eating-related behaviors and weight-related outcomes, encompassing Binge-Eating Disorder, Feeding Behavior, Body Mass Index, Obesity, Body Weight, Emotions, Eating, and Animals. Cluster 3 was characterised by demographic groups and research methodology, including Adult, Young Adult, Middle Aged, Aged, Surveys and Questionnaires, Psychometrics, Self Report, and Reproducibility of Results. Cluster 4 centered on eating disorder diagnoses and clinical outcomes, including Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, Treatment Outcome, Case-Control Studies, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Cluster 5 reflected psychosocial and self-perception-related themes, represented by Body Image, Students, and Self Concept. Finally, Cluster 6 consisted of mental health-related constructs, including Depression and Anxiety.

174 Figure 1. Flowchart of Study Selection Process for Eating Disorders Publications from 2014 to 2023

175



176 Table 1. Frequency and Connectivity of MeSH Terms in Eating Disorders Publications from 2014 to
177 2023

Rank	MeSH Term	Occurrences	Total Link Strength	Cluster Number
1	Humans	12916	68270	1
2	Female	8746	56075	1
3	Feeding and Eating Disorders	7452	41698	1
4	Adult	5457	38669	3
5	Male	5241	36432	1
6	Adolescent	5103	35260	1
7	Young Adult	3893	29915	3
8	Anorexia Nervosa	3750	18528	4
9	Surveys and Questionnaires	2294	17464	3
10	Middle Aged	2003	16488	3
11	Child	1953	12156	1
12	Binge-Eating Disorder	1905	11447	2
13	Feeding Behavior	1858	12714	2
14	Body Image	1431	10145	5
15	Cross-Sectional Studies	1339	9832	1
16	Bulimia Nervosa	1282	7971	4
17	Body Mass Index	1164	9219	2
18	Treatment Outcome	1098	6646	4
19	Obesity	972	6539	2
20	Risk Factors	969	6756	1
21	Emotions	795	5475	2
22	Body Weight	790	6062	2
23	Prevalence	756	5744	1
24	Bulimia	728	4851	2
25	Depression	697	5593	6
26	Aged	661	5836	3
27	Students	642	4886	5
28	Eating	628	4428	2
29	Anxiety	603	4448	6
30	Case-Control Studies	589	4256	4
31	Retrospective Studies	576	3613	1

32	Comorbidity	574	3938	1
33	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	569	3446	4
34	Psychometrics	540	4429	3
35	Self Concept	539	4239	5
36	Self Report	522	4204	3
37	Reproducibility of Results	521	4157	3
38	Animals	512	1563	2

178 Abbreviation: MeSH, Medical Subject Heading.

MeSH Term Profiles of Top AAS and CPY Articles

Table 2 summarizes the occurrence and total link strength of frequently appearing MeSH terms among the top 20 articles ranked by AAS and CPY. Among the top 20 articles with the highest AAS, 131 unique MeSH terms were identified, of which 10 occurred five or more times. In comparison, 121 unique MeSH terms were identified among the top 20 articles ranked by CPY, with six terms occurring five or more times.

Several MeSH terms were commonly represented in both groups. Humans was the most frequently occurring MeSH term in both the AAS and CPY groups, appearing in 19 and 20 articles, respectively. Female, male, feeding and eating disorders, adult, and anorexia nervosa were also among the most frequently occurring MeSH terms in both groups.

Despite these similarities, notable differences were observed. Female and male appeared more frequently among the top AAS articles than among the top CPY articles. Age-related terms, including adolescent and young adult, were identified only among the most frequently occurring MeSH terms in the AAS group. Similarly, COVID-19 and surveys and questionnaires were present only in the AAS group, each with five occurrences. In contrast, feeding and eating disorders appeared more frequently among the top CPY articles than among the top AAS articles (16 vs. 13 occurrences). Overall, the top AAS articles exhibited a broader range of frequently occurring MeSH terms than the top CPY articles (10 vs. 6 terms).

Table 2. Comparison of MeSH Term Occurrences and Total Link Strength in Top 20 Articles by Altmetric Attention Score (AAS) and Citation per Year (CPY)

MeSH Term	MeSH Terms in the Top 20 Articles by AAS		MeSH Terms in the Top 20 Articles by CPY	
	Occurrences	Total Link Strength	Occurrences	Total Link Strength
Humans	19	87	20	46
Female	15	75	10	34
Male	15	75	9	31
Feeding and eating disorders	13	66	16	38
Adolescent	12	64	-	-
Adult	11	61	6	21
Young adult	9	52	-	-
Surveys and questionnaires	5	29	-	-
COVID-19	5	29	-	-
Anorexia nervosa	5	22	5	20

Abbreviations: AAS, Altmetric Attention Score; CPY, Citations per Year; COVID-19, Coronavirus disease 2019; MeSH, Medical Subject Heading.

Highly Ranked Articles by AAS and CPY

Examination of the top 20 publications ranked by AAS (**Table 3**) and the top 20 publications ranked by CPY (**Table 4**) revealed three overlapping articles. Notably, the studies by Watson et al. (2019) on genetic risk factors for anorexia nervosa (Watson et al., 2019), Galmiche et al. (2019) on the prevalence of eating disorders (Galmiche et al., 2019), and Mountjoy et al. (2018) on the relative energy deficiency in sport (RED-S) (Mountjoy et al.) appeared on both lists. The overlapping articles ranked 5th, 7th, and 18th in the AAS list and 2nd, 1st, and 9th in the CPY list, respectively.

The articles ranked highest by AAS were not limited to traditional eating disorder topics but frequently involved issues with strong public visibility or immediate societal relevance. The highest-ranked article addressed blindness caused by a junk food diet, while other highly ranked articles focused on psilocybin therapy, adolescent obesity and eating disorder prevention, COVID-19-related changes in eating disorder incidence and care, social media use, sugar addiction, diet pill and laxative use, school environments, and disparities in diagnosis and treatment. These topics indicate that articles receiving high public attention often addressed themes that were timely, clinically striking, youth-focused, or closely connected to public health discourse.

In contrast, the articles ranked highest by CPY more often reflected evidence synthesis, consensus guidance, epidemiology, and mechanistic or theoretical contributions. Highly cited articles included systematic reviews, consensus statements, broad clinical reviews, and studies on genetic, neurobiological, psychological, and epidemiological aspects of eating disorders. Several articles addressed COVID-19, but these tended to focus on

systematic review, risk factors, and symptom trajectories rather than immediate care utilisation or public-facing clinical concerns.

227 Table 3. Top 20 Journals by Altmetric Attention Score (AAS) in Feeding and Eating Disorder Research from 2014 to 2023

Rank	Year	First Author	Journal	Title	AAS	CPY	MeSH Terms
1	2019	Harrison R	Ann Intern Med	Blindness caused by a junk food diet	2954.7	2.4	Adolescent; Humans; Male; Feeding and Eating Disorders/complications; Delayed Diagnosis; Diet/adverse effects; Blindness/diagnosis/etiology; Optic Nerve Diseases/etiology
2	2023	Peck SK	Nat Med	Psilocybin therapy for females with anorexia nervosa: A phase 1, open-label feasibility study	1841.7	24.0	Adult; Humans; Female; Anorexia Nervosa/drug therapy; Treatment Outcome; Body Mass Index; Feasibility Studies; Psilocybin/adverse effects
3	2016	Golden NH	Pediatrics	Preventing obesity and eating disorders in adolescents	1806.4	23.5	Adolescent; Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders; Humans; Prevalence; Meals; Evidence-Based Medicine; Health Status; Body Image; Physician's Role; Life Style; Family; Feeding and Eating Disorders/complications/diagnosis/prevention & control; Motivational Interviewing; Pediatric Obesity/prevention & control
4	2023	Trafford AM	Lancet Child Adolesc Health	Temporal trends in eating disorder and self-harm incidence rates among adolescents and young adults in the UK in the 2 years since onset of the COVID-19 pandemic: a population-based study	1656.1	13.0	Adolescent; Adult; Humans; Young Adult; Female; Male; Pandemics; COVID-19/epidemiology; Feeding and Eating Disorders/epidemiology; Incidence; Self-Injurious Behavior/epidemiology/psychology; United Kingdom/epidemiology
5	2019	Watson HJ	Nat Genet	Genome-wide association study identifies eight risk loci and implicates metabo-psychiatric origins for anorexia nervosa	1580.6	122.6	Adult; Humans; Female; Male; Body Mass Index; Genome-Wide Association Study; Phenotype; Prognosis; Case-Control Studies; Genetic Predisposition to Disease; Quantitative Trait Loci; Anorexia Nervosa/etiology/genetics/pathology; Genomics/methods; Mental Disorders/complications/genetics; Metabolic Diseases/complications/genetics

Rank	Year	First Author	Journal	Title	AAS	CPY	MeSH Terms
6	2023	López-Gil JF	JAMA Pediatr	Global proportion of disordered eating in children and adolescents: A systematic review and meta-analysis	1290.3	29.0	Adolescent; Humans; Child; Female; Male; COVID-19; Feeding and Eating Disorders/diagnosis/epidemiology; Surveys and Questionnaires; Body Mass Index
7	2019	Galmiche M	Am J Clin Nutr	Prevalence of eating disorders over the 2000-2018 period: a systematic literature review	1184.9	143.6	Humans; anorexia nervosa; binge eating disorder; bulimia nervosa; Prevalence; Female; Male; eating disorders; Asia/epidemiology; prevalence; feeding disorders; Anorexia Nervosa/epidemiology; Binge-Eating Disorder/epidemiology; Feeding and Eating Disorders/epidemiology; Europe/epidemiology; Americas/epidemiology
8	2022	Hartman-Munick SM	JAMA Pediatr	Association of the COVID-19 pandemic with adolescent and young adult eating disorder care volume	1161.1	15.0	Adolescent; Humans; Young Adult; Pandemics; Feeding and Eating Disorders/epidemiology/therapy; COVID-19/epidemiology; Hospitalization; Emergency Service, Hospital
9	2016	Sidani JE	J Acad Nutr Diet	The association between social media use and eating concerns among US young adults	1100.7	14.5	Humans; Surveys and Questionnaires; Female; Male; Adult; Young Adult; United States; Feeding and Eating Disorders/psychology; Body image; Disordered eating; Odds Ratio; Cross-Sectional Studies; Eating/psychology; Logistic Models; Social media; Social Media/statistics & numerical data; Eating concerns
10	2016	Westwater ML	Eur J Nutr	Sugar addiction: the state of the science	1089.7	10.3	Humans; Animals; Obesity; Binge eating; Motivation; Obesity/psychology; Food; Binge-Eating Disorder; Disease Models, Animal; Behavior, Addictive; Sugar addiction; Drug addiction; Substance-Related Disorders; Dietary Fats/administration & dosage; Dietary Sucrose/administration & dosage/pharmacology; Animal neuroscience; Glycemic Index; Glycemic Load; Receptors, Dopamine D2

Rank	Year	First Author	Journal	Title	AAS	CPY	MeSH Terms
11	2020	Termorshuizen JD	Int J Eat Disord	Early impact of COVID-19 on individuals with self-reported eating disorders: A survey of ~1,000 individuals in the United States and the Netherlands	951.6	45.0	Adolescent; Adult; Humans; Young Adult; Female; Male; COVID-19; eating disorders; pandemic; Mental Health; Health Services Accessibility; Health Behavior; Middle Aged; mental health; United States; Self Report; Feeding and Eating Disorders/psychology/therapy; Telemedicine; Needs Assessment; Netherlands; coronavirus; quarantine; Pandemics; Coronavirus Infections; Health Status Indicators; Pneumonia, Viral; Anxiety/epidemiology/etiology
12	2021	Otto AK	Pediatrics	Medical admissions among adolescents with eating disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic	870.4	29.7	Adolescent; Humans; Child; Young Adult; Female; Male; Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder; SARS-CoV-2; Hospitalization/statistics & numerical data; Pandemics; COVID-19/epidemiology; Michigan/epidemiology; Interrupted Time Series Analysis
13	2018	Warrier V	Transl Psychiatry	Genome-wide analyses of self-reported empathy: correlations with autism, schizophrenia, and anorexia nervosa	856.0	10.8	Humans; Female; Male; Adult; Anorexia Nervosa/genetics; Polymorphism, Single Nucleotide/genetics; Genome-Wide Association Study; Personality/genetics; Autism Spectrum Disorder/genetics; Empathy/genetics; Extraversion, Psychological; Schizophrenia/genetics
14	2020	Qu N	Mol Psychiatry	A POMC-originated circuit regulates stress-induced hypophagia, depression, and anhedonia	836.5	15.8	Animals; Female; Male; Anhedonia; Mice; Neural Pathways; Arcuate Nucleus of Hypothalamus/metabolism/pathology; Depression/metabolism; Feeding and Eating Disorders/etiology/metabolism/psychology; Mice, Inbred C57BL; Pro-Opiomelanocortin/metabolism; Stress, Psychological/complications/metabolism; Ventral Tegmental Area/metabolism/pathology

Rank	Year	First Author	Journal	Title	AAS	CPY	MeSH Terms
15	2020	Levinson JA	Am J Public Health	Diet pill and laxative use for weight control and subsequent incident eating disorder in US young women: 2001-2016	820.1	7.5	Adolescent; Adult; Humans; Young Adult; Female; Feeding Behavior; United States/epidemiology; Prospective Studies; Longitudinal Studies; Weight Loss; Logistic Models; Feeding and Eating Disorders/diagnosis/epidemiology; Odds Ratio; Appetite Depressants/administration & dosage; Drug Utilization; Laxatives/administration & dosage
16	2016	Haines J	Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act	Family functioning and quality of parent-adolescent relationship: cross-sectional associations with adolescent weight-related behaviors and weight status	770.3	10.9	Adolescent; Humans; Feeding Behavior; Female; Male; Adult; Young Adult; Body Weight; Health Behavior; Parent-Child Relations; Adolescent Behavior; Odds Ratio; Eating; Exercise; Cross-Sectional Studies; Parents; Family functioning; Overweight; Diet; Feeding and Eating Disorders/etiology; Sleep; Obesity/etiology; Family; Obesity risk; Parent-adolescent relationship; Weight-related behaviors
17	2016	Bould H	Int J Epidemiol	The influence of school on whether girls develop eating disorders	767.2	3.5	Adolescent; Humans; Eating disorders; Surveys and Questionnaires; bulimia nervosa; Female; Male; Risk Factors; Adult; EDNOS; anorexia nervosa; Students/psychology; Feeding and Eating Disorders/epidemiology/psychology; Incidence; Sweden/epidemiology; Schools; Anorexia Nervosa/epidemiology/psychology; Bulimia Nervosa/epidemiology/psychology; Educational Status; Social Class; Income/statistics & numerical data; Logistic Models; multilevel; record-linkage; school
18	2018	Mountjoy M	Br J Sports Med	International Olympic Committee (IOC) consensus statement on relative energy deficiency in sport (RED-S): 2018 update	739.3	79.5	Humans; Female; Male; disordered eating; Ethnicity; Energy Intake; Sports Nutritional Physiological Phenomena; Female Athlete Triad Syndrome; female athlete triad; low energy availability; Consensus; low bone mineral density; amenorrhea; Energy Metabolism; Disabled Persons; low testosterone;

Rank	Year	First Author	Journal	Title	AAS	CPY	MeSH Terms
							relative energy deficiency in sport (RED-S); Malnutrition/diagnosis/physiopathology/therapy
19	2018	Eik-Nes TT	Int J Eat Disord	Prospective health associations of drive for muscularity in young adult males	733.5	7.3	Adolescent; Humans; Surveys and Questionnaires; eating disorder; Male; Body Image/psychology; Adult; Young Adult; body image; Binge-Eating Disorder/psychology; Prospective Studies; gender; outcomes; males; adolescence
20	2018	Sonneville KR	Int J Eat Disord	Disparities in eating disorder diagnosis and treatment according to weight status, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic background, and sex among college students	725.2	32.3	Adolescent; Humans; Feeding and Eating Disorders/diagnosis/psychology/therapy; Surveys and Questionnaires; Female; Male; eating disorders; treatment; Adult; Young Adult; Body Weight/physiology; disordered eating; college health; diagnosis; Ethnicity; Racial Groups; Sexual Health/trends; Socioeconomic Factors; Students/psychology

228 Abbreviations: AAS, Altmetric Attention Score; CPY, Citations per Year; COVID-19, Coronavirus disease 2019; MeSH, Medical Subject Headings; POMC, pro-

229 opiomelanocortin; SARS-CoV-2, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2; UK, United Kingdom; US, United States.

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231 Table 4. Top 20 Journals by Citations per Year (CPY) in Feeding and Eating Disorder Research from 2014 to 2023

Rank	Year	First Author	Journal	Title	CPY	AAS	MeSH Term
1	2019	Galmiche M	Am J Clin Nutr	Prevalence of eating disorders over the 2000-2018 period: a systematic literature review	143.6	1184.9	Humans; anorexia nervosa; binge eating disorder; bulimia nervosa; Prevalence; Female; Male; eating disorders; Asia/epidemiology; prevalence; feeding disorders; Anorexia Nervosa/epidemiology; Binge-Eating Disorder/epidemiology; Feeding and Eating Disorders/epidemiology; Europe/epidemiology; Americas/epidemiology
2	2019	Watson HJ	Nat Genet	Genome-wide association study identifies eight risk loci and implicates metabo-psychiatric origins for anorexia nervosa	122.6	1580.6	Adult; Humans; Female; Male; Body Mass Index; Genome-Wide Association Study; Phenotype; Prognosis; Case-Control Studies; Genetic Predisposition to Disease; Quantitative Trait Loci; Anorexia Nervosa/etiology/genetics/pathology; Genomics/methods; Mental Disorders/complications/genetics; Metabolic Diseases/complications/genetics
3	2023	J Devoe D	Int J Eat Disord	The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on eating disorders: A systematic review	118.0	205.9	Adult; Humans; Child; Bulimia Nervosa/psychology; Feeding and Eating Disorders/diagnosis/epidemiology; Pandemics; Anorexia Nervosa/therapy; COVID-19/epidemiology; Communicable Disease Control; COVID-19; eating disorders; pandemic
4	2020	Treasure J	Lancet	Eating disorders	101.5	92.0	Feeding and Eating Disorders/diagnosis/physiopathology/psychology/therapy; Adolescent; Adult; Diagnosis, Differential; Humans; Nutritional Status
5	2014	Mountjoy M	Br J Sports Med	The IOC consensus statement: beyond the female athlete triad--relative energy deficiency in sport (RED-S)	88.4	529.2	Humans; Osteoporosis; Female; Male; Risk Assessment; Sports Medicine; Bone Density Conservation Agents/therapeutic use; Dietary Supplements; Energy Intake/physiology; Energy Metabolism/physiology; Recovery of Function; Bone Mineral Density; Athletic Performance/physiology; Energy Stores, Energy Delivery and Substrate Utilisation During Exercise; Female Athlete

Rank	Year	First Author	Journal	Title	CPY	AAS	MeSH Term
							Triad Syndrome/metabolism/prevention & control; Food Intake/Body Weight Regulation; Metabolic Diseases/prevention & control
6	2017	Volkow ND	Nat Rev Neurosci	The dopamine motive system: implications for drug and food addiction	85.4	99.4	Humans; Animals; Reinforcement, Psychology; Motivation/drug effects; Behavior, Addictive/drug therapy/physiopathology; Dopamine/metabolism/pharmacology; Food Addiction/drug therapy; Neural Pathways/drug effects
7	2016	Holland G	Body Image	A systematic review of the impact of the use of social networking sites on body image and disordered eating outcomes	83.8	707.3	Humans; Female; Male; Risk Factors; Body Image/psychology; Feeding and Eating Disorders/psychology; Body image; Internet; Systematic review; Disordered eating; Social Media; Body Dysmorphic Disorders/psychology; Social Networking; Social networking sites; Facebook
8	2020	Rodgers RF	Int J Eat Disord	The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on eating disorder risk and symptoms	80.0	401.9	Humans; Female; Male; Risk Factors; COVID-19; eating disorders; SARS-CoV-2; Feeding Behavior/psychology; Feeding and Eating Disorders/psychology; risk and protective factors; body image; Fear; access to care; Adaptation, Psychological; Betacoronavirus; Exercise/psychology; media; Quarantine/psychology; Coronavirus Infections/prevention & control/psychology; Pandemics/prevention & control; Pneumonia, Viral/prevention & control/psychology
9	2018	Mountjoy M	Br J Sports Med	International Olympic Committee (IOC) consensus statement on relative energy deficiency in sport (RED-S): 2018 update	79.5	739.3	Humans; Female; Male; disordered eating; Ethnicity; Energy Intake; Sports Nutritional Physiological Phenomena; Female Athlete Triad Syndrome; female athlete triad; low energy availability; Consensus; low bone mineral density; amenorrhea; Energy Metabolism; Disabled Persons; low testosterone; relative energy deficiency in sport (RED-S); Malnutrition/diagnosis/physiopathology/therapy

Rank	Year	First Author	Journal	Title	CPY	AAS	MeSH Term
10	2017	Sloan E	Clin Psychol Rev	Emotion regulation as a transdiagnostic treatment construct across anxiety, depression, substance, eating and borderline personality disorders: A systematic review	78.7	40.0	Humans; Treatment; Psychopathology; Transdiagnostic; Emotion regulation; Emotions/physiology; Feeding and Eating Disorders/physiopathology/therapy; Self-Control; Affective Symptoms/physiopathology/therapy; Anxiety Disorders/physiopathology/therapy; Borderline Personality Disorder/physiopathology/therapy; Depressive Disorder/physiopathology/therapy; Emotion dysregulation; Substance-Related Disorders/physiopathology/therapy
11	2018	Udo T	Biol Psychiatry	Prevalence and correlates of DSM-5-defined eating disorders in a nationally representative sample of U.S. adults	78.3	203.2	Adolescent; Anorexia nervosa; Binge-eating disorder; Bulimia nervosa; Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders; Humans; Prevalence; Female; Male; Adult; Young Adult; Age of Onset; Anorexia Nervosa/complications/diagnosis/epidemiology; Binge-Eating Disorder/complications/diagnosis/epidemiology; Body Mass Index; Bulimia Nervosa/complications/diagnosis/epidemiology; Feeding and Eating Disorders/complications/diagnosis/epidemiology; Impairment; Middle Aged; Obesity; Obesity/complications/diagnosis/epidemiology; United States
12	2014	Howard LM	Lancet	Non-psychotic mental disorders in the perinatal period	76.9	199.2	Humans; Prognosis; Female; Feeding and Eating Disorders/diagnosis/epidemiology/therapy; Treatment Outcome; Adult; Risk Assessment; Young Adult; Randomized Controlled Trials as Topic; Pregnancy; Incidence; Severity of Illness Index; Postpartum Period/psychology; Maternal Welfare; Anxiety Disorders/diagnosis/drug therapy/epidemiology; Depression, Postpartum/diagnosis/drug therapy/epidemiology; Mental Disorders/diagnosis/epidemiology/therapy; Perinatal Care/methods; Personality Disorders/diagnosis/drug

Rank	Year	First Author	Journal	Title	CPY	AAS	MeSH Term
							therapy/epidemiology; Psychotic Disorders/diagnosis/drug therapy/epidemiology
13	2021	van Eeden AE	Curr Opin Psychiatry	Incidence, prevalence and mortality of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa	75.0	129.7	Humans; Prevalence; Female; Male; Feeding and Eating Disorders; Anorexia Nervosa/epidemiology; Bulimia Nervosa/epidemiology; Incidence
14	2016	Baglioni C	Psychol Bull	Sleep and mental disorders: A meta-analysis of polysomnographic research	74.1	58.5	Comorbidity; Humans; Schizophrenic Psychology; Mood Disorders/epidemiology/psychology; Feeding and Eating Disorders/epidemiology/psychology; Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity/epidemiology/psychology; Mental Disorders/epidemiology/psychology; Polysomnography; Anxiety Disorders/epidemiology/psychology; Depressive Disorder, Major/epidemiology/psychology; Sleep; Antisocial Personality Disorder/epidemiology/psychology; Autistic Disorder/epidemiology/psychology; Borderline Personality Disorder/epidemiology/psychology; Child Development Disorders, Pervasive/epidemiology/psychology; Schizophrenia/epidemiology; Sleep Wake Disorders/epidemiology/physiopathology/psychology; Sleep, REM
15	2020	Phillipou A	Int J Eat Disord	Eating and exercise behaviors in eating disorders and the general population during the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia: Initial results from the COLLATE project	73.5	435.3	Adult; Humans; anorexia nervosa; Female; Male; eating disorder; COVID-19; pandemic; Mental Health; Australia; SARS-CoV-2; Feeding Behavior/psychology; Australia/epidemiology; Self Report; Feeding and Eating Disorders/epidemiology/psychology; national survey; coronavirus; Betacoronavirus; Exercise/psychology; Quarantine/psychology; Coronavirus Infections/prevention & control/psychology; Pandemics/prevention & control; Pneumonia, Viral/prevention & control/psychology

Rank	Year	First Author	Journal	Title	CPY	AAS	MeSH Term
16	2020	Fernández-Aranda F	Eur Eat Disord Rev	COVID-19 and implications for eating disorders	73.0	121.9	Humans; Pandemics; COVID-19; SARS-CoV-2; Feeding and Eating Disorders/etiology; Betacoronavirus; Coronavirus Infections/complications; Pneumonia, Viral/complications
17	2016	Zhao QF	J Affect Disord	The prevalence of neuropsychiatric symptoms in Alzheimer's disease: Systematic review and meta-analysis	68.625	25.0	Comorbidity; Humans; Prevalence; Meta-analysis; Feeding and Eating Disorders/epidemiology; Depression/epidemiology; Anxiety/epidemiology; Aggression; Hallucinations/epidemiology; Sleep Wake Disorders/epidemiology; Delusions/epidemiology; Irritable Mood; Alzheimer Disease/epidemiology/psychology; Alzheimer's disease; Apathy; Euphoria; Neuropsychiatric symptoms
18	2016	Rice SM	Sports Med	The mental health of elite athletes: A narrative systematic review	67.8	339.3	Humans; Risk Factors; Athletes/psychology; Stress, Psychological/epidemiology; Incidence; Adaptation, Psychological; Mental Health; Depression/epidemiology; Anxiety/epidemiology; Competitive Behavior; Feeding and Eating Disorders/epidemiology; Substance-Related Disorders/epidemiology
19	2020	van Hoeken D	Curr Opin Psychiatry	Review of the burden of eating disorders: mortality, disability, costs, quality of life, and family burden	63.8	193.9	Humans; Cost of Illness; Feeding and Eating Disorders/economics/mortality/psychology; Quality of Life; Family Health; Health Status; Mental Health
20	2016	Keski-Rahkonen A	Curr Opin Psychiatry	Epidemiology of eating disorders in Europe: prevalence, incidence, comorbidity, course, consequences, and risk factors	63.6	84.2	Humans; Europe/epidemiology; Feeding and Eating Disorders/epidemiology

Abbreviations: AAS, Altmetric Attention Score; CPY, Citations per Year; COLLATE, COvid-19 and you: mentaL heaLth in AusTralia now survey; COVID-19, Coronavirus disease 2019; DSM-5, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition; IOC, International Olympic Committee; MeSH, Medical Subject Headings; SARS-CoV-2, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2; US, United States

DISCUSSION

This study examined differences between publications attracting substantial public attention and those achieving high scholarly impact in feeding and eating disorder research published between 2014 and 2023. Three key findings emerged. First, feeding and eating disorder research was primarily centered on human populations and eating disorder-related conditions, with frequent representation of demographic, behavioral, and clinical concepts. Second, MeSH term co-occurrence analysis identified six thematic clusters, indicating that the field has developed across several interconnected research domains. Third, publications attracting substantial public attention differed from those achieving high scholarly impact in both thematic profile and research focus, suggesting that public attention and scholarly impact reflect related but distinct dimensions of influence within feeding and eating disorder research.

Research applying Altmetric indicators to feeding and eating disorder literature remains limited. A prior study analyzing 310 articles published in the International Journal of Eating Disorders reported that higher Altmetric scores, particularly Facebook mentions, were associated with greater citation counts ($r = 0.33$, $p < 0.01$) (Karimipour et al., 2020). Our previous study found a weak association between Altmetric-based public engagement and citation-based academic attention in eating disorder research ($R^2 = 9.09\%$) (Lee & Chi, 2025). To better understand this finding, the present study shifted the unit of analysis from the field level to the article level and directly examined the thematic profiles and characteristics of publications receiving substantial public attention and those achieving high scholarly impact. By moving beyond metric-based comparisons, this approach provided

insight into similarities and differences between public attention and scholarly impact in feeding and eating disorder research.

Comparison of MeSH term profiles between the top AAS and CPY articles revealed notable differences. Terms related to younger populations, particularly adolescent and young adult, were among the most frequently represented MeSH terms in the AAS group but did not reach the frequency threshold for inclusion among the most frequently represented terms in the CPY group. This pattern may reflect the heightened public interest in eating disorder-related issues affecting adolescents and young adults, who represent populations frequently exposed to social media, body image concerns, and rapidly changing sociocultural pressures (Chew & Temples, 2022; Rounsefell et al., 2020). Research focusing on these age groups may therefore be more likely to attract attention from the general public, news media, and online communities. Another notable finding was that COVID-19 met the frequency threshold for inclusion among the most frequently represented MeSH terms only in the AAS group. This finding suggests that pandemic-related research attracted substantial public attention, likely reflecting widespread concerns regarding mental health, healthcare access, and eating-related behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ganiem, 2021; Wahyuni et al., 2021).

Examination of the top-ranked publications by AAS and CPY revealed several common research themes. Both lists included studies on the prevalence and epidemiology of eating disorders, such as Galmiche et al. (2019)'s systematic review (Galmiche et al., 2019), as well as research on genetic and biological underpinnings, exemplified by Watson et al. (2019)'s genome-wide association study (Watson et al., 2019). Additionally, Mountjoy et al.'s International Olympic Committee (IOC) consensus statements on RED-S appeared in

both lists (Mountjoy et al., 2018). The presence of these studies in both rankings suggests overlap between public attention and scholarly impact for selected topics within eating disorder research. The overlapping publications spanned epidemiology, biological mechanisms, and clinical guidance, indicating broad relevance to both academic and public audiences.

Despite thematic overlap, notable differences were observed in the focus and scope of publications included in the top 20 AAS (**Table 3**) and top 20 CPY (**Table 4**) rankings, suggesting distinct drivers of public and scholarly engagement. Publications in the AAS ranking frequently addressed topics with immediate societal relevance and broad public appeal, such as "Blindness caused by a junk food diet" (Harrison et al., 2019) and "Psilocybin therapy for females with anorexia nervosa: A phase 1, open-label feasibility study" (Peck et al., 2023). Similarly, studies examining social media use and eating concerns, healthcare disparities, and other issues with direct implications for daily life were highly represented among the most publicly discussed publications. These topics were readily accessible to non-specialist audiences and often aligned with ongoing societal conversations, thereby attracting substantial media coverage and public attention.

In contrast, the articles ranked highest by CPY more often reflected evidence synthesis, consensus guidance, epidemiology, and mechanistic or theoretical contributions. Representative examples included Udo & Grilo et al. (2018), which examined the prevalence and correlates of DSM-5-defined eating disorders in a nationally representative sample (Udo & Grilo, 2018), Sloan et al. (2017), which proposed emotion regulation as a transdiagnostic construct across psychiatric disorders (Sloan et al., 2017), and Volkow et al. (2017), which explored the dopamine motive system and its implications for food addiction (Volkow et al.,

2017). These studies contributed to the development of epidemiological evidence, conceptual frameworks, and mechanistic understanding that continue to inform subsequent research.

This distinction was also evident among COVID-19-related publications. Studies appearing in the AAS ranking often focused on the immediate consequences of the pandemic, including increases in eating disorder incidence, hospitalisation, and healthcare utilisation. Examples included the population-based study by Trafford et al. (2023) examining eating disorder and self-harm incidence rates among adolescents and young adults (Trafford et al., 2023), the study by Hartman-Munick et al. (2022) investigating changes in eating disorder care volume (Hartman-Munick et al., 2022), and the report by Otto et al. (2021) describing increased medical admissions among adolescents with eating disorders during the pandemic (Otto et al., 2021). In contrast, COVID-19-related publications in the CPY ranking more frequently emphasized evidence synthesis and conceptual understanding, as illustrated by the systematic review conducted by Devoe et al. (2023) (J Devoe et al., 2023), the investigation of risk and protective factors by Rodgers et al. (2020) (Rodgers et al., 2020). and the discussion of clinical implications by Fernández-Aranda et al. (2020) (Fernández-Aranda et al., 2020). Together, these findings suggest that publications attracting substantial public attention often addressed topics with immediate societal relevance, whereas highly cited publications more frequently contributed to the development of scientific knowledge and theoretical understanding within the field.

A limitation of this study is the use of the past 10 years (2014-2023) as the study period. This timeframe was chosen because AAS data has only been available since 2011, and selecting the most recent decade ensured a sufficient and stable dataset while capturing contemporary research trends. Additionally, the exclusion of studies without a DOI presents

another limitation, as DOIs were required to retrieve both AAS information and citation data. While necessary for data collection, this criterion may have led to the omission of relevant research contributions.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined differences between publications receiving high public attention and those achieving high scholarly impact in feeding and eating disorder research published between 2014 and 2023. While overlap was observed for topics, notable differences were identified in both MeSH term profiles and thematic focus. Publications receiving high public attention more frequently addressed socially visible and timely topics, whereas publications achieving high scholarly impact more often contributed to epidemiological evidence and understanding of the biological and psychological mechanisms underlying eating disorders. These suggest that public and academic audiences may prioritize different aspects of feeding and eating disorder research. These findings underscore the importance of examining both public attention and scholarly impact when evaluating the communication of health research. Understanding how different audiences engage with scientific publications may help researchers, communicators, and policy stakeholders improve the dissemination and societal reach of evidence-based health information.

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