

# Remember the Past: Body-related Autobiographical Memories in Patients with an Eating Disorder

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|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Ethical review</b>        | Approved WMO                      |
| <b>Status</b>                | Recruiting                        |
| <b>Health condition type</b> | Eating disorders and disturbances |
| <b>Study type</b>            | Observational non invasive        |

## Summary

### ID

NL-OMON55945

### Source

ToetsingOnline

### Brief title

Remember the Past

### Condition

- Eating disorders and disturbances

### Synonym

Body Image, Eating disorders

### Research involving

Human

### Sponsors and support

**Primary sponsor:** Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

**Source(s) of monetary or material Support:** Ministerie van OC&W

## Intervention

**Keyword:** Autobiographical Memories, Disgust, Eating Disorders, Negative Body Image

## Outcome measures

### Primary outcome

The main study parameters are memory specificity and (disgust & escape) reactions to memories during generative and direct retrieval. Other main study parameters include habitual levels of motivation to avoid experiencing disgust, negative body image, and self-directed disgust.

### Secondary outcome

Secondary parameters are: eating disorder symptoms, demographic information, depression scores, and ratings of cues used in the AMTs.

## Study description

### Background summary

Like many other mental disorders, eating disorders are marked by insufficient recovery after treatment. One factor playing a role in the persistence of eating disorders may be a persevering negative body image. Recent research suggests that the emotion of disgust towards the own body is closely connected to body image disturbances and (other) eating disorder symptoms. This pre-dominance of disgust in defining patients' body image is likely to bias information processing to information that is congruent with that body image. Importantly, memories about past aversive experiences involving the own body (e.g., receiving an insulting comment about one's appearance) may become highly accessible. Specific autobiographical memories may be a source of powerful emotions. Thus, accessing specific memories with a disgust-related content would likely result in the experience of intense disgust. Disgust is a powerful defensive emotion that elicits a strong urge to avoid disgust-elicitors. Therefore, in order to avoid feeling intense disgust, eating disorders-patients may avoid specific memories through (1) controlled avoidance to prevent experiencing disgust during abstract (top-down, generative) memory retrieval and (2) re-active avoidance to escape from feeling disgusted during concrete/direct (bottom-up, associative) memory retrieval. We hypothesize that

abstract memory retrieval leads to fewer specific memories than concrete retrieval and that this reduced memory specificity is related to negative body image scores and a patient's motivation to prevent experiencing disgust. In addition, we hypothesize that concrete retrieval results in more specific and disgust-eliciting memories than abstract retrieval, and that negative body image scores predict stronger tendencies to escape from memories because of the elicited disgust.

## **Study objective**

The main objectives of this project are to increase our knowledge of factors playing a role in the maintenance of body image concerns in eating disorder patients. More specifically, we will examine the involvement of disgust-based avoidance of specific autobiographical memories about patients' own bodies in concrete and abstract memory retrieval.

## **Study design**

The design of the study is a observational within-participants study with two measurement occasions (T1 & T2) comparing abstract and concrete retrieval of body-related memories on two versions of the Autobiographical Memory Test (AMT). We attempt to elicit the different retrieval processes by asking eating disorder patients to recall personal memories in response to body-related cue words that are either abstract (generative retrieval; abstract AMT) or concrete (direct retrieval; concrete AMT). Each AMT will be administered on one measurement occasion (T1/T2), and the order will be counterbalanced across participants.

## **Study burden and risks**

Participants will be asked to fill out six questionnaires, engage in the two AMTs and rate their memories after each of the AMTs. In total, the time investment will be 100 minutes. Recalling potentially negative memories may elicit negative affect in the patients. Because all patients will be in treatment at the time of the study, any negative effects of the study can be discussed with their therapists. The study is expected to advance our current understanding of the persistence of body image disturbances in patients with an eating disorder. Both hypothesized forms of avoidance are expected to ultimately result in representations of body-related memories at a semantic-categorical level (e.g., \*I always look gross at the beach\*). Since autobiographical memories serve as a crucial source of how people define themselves, a bias towards disgust-congruent over-general memories will likely affirm and maintain the negative body image by obstructing the processing of potentially corrective information.

## Contacts

### Public

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### Scientific

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## Trial sites

### Listed location countries

Netherlands

## Eligibility criteria

### Age

Adolescents (16-17 years)

Adults (18-64 years)

### Inclusion criteria

Patients need to be in treatment or are being referred to the treatment facilities.

Patients must be in treatment for the duration of the study.

Patients meet the DSM-5 criteria of: Anorexia nervosa, Bulimia nervosa, Other specified or Unspecified Feeding or Eating Disorder

Patients need to be at least 16 years old to participate.

The patient\*s therapist deems the patient physically and cognitively able to complete questionnaires for 60 minutes (in one sitting) behind a computer.

Patients must be female.

## Exclusion criteria

None

## Study design

### Design

**Study type:** Observational non invasive

Masking: Open (masking not used)

Control: Uncontrolled

Primary purpose: Basic science

### Recruitment

NL

Recruitment status: Recruiting

Start date (anticipated): 14-12-2020

Enrollment: 70

Type: Actual

## Ethics review

Approved WMO

Date: 05-02-2020

Application type: First submission

Review commission: METC Universitair Medisch Centrum Groningen (Groningen)

Approved WMO

Date: 08-10-2020

Application type: Amendment

Review commission: METC Universitair Medisch Centrum Groningen (Groningen)

Approved WMO

Date: 09-09-2022

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Application type:  | Amendment   |
| Review commission: | METC Universitair Medisch Centrum Groningen (Groningen) |
| Approved WMO       |   |
| Date:              | 07-04-2023  |
| Application type:  | Amendment   |
| Review commission: | METC Universitair Medisch Centrum Groningen (Groningen) |
| Approved WMO       |   |
| Date:              | 06-12-2023  |
| Application type:  | Amendment   |
| Review commission: | METC Universitair Medisch Centrum Groningen (Groningen) |

## Study registrations

### Followed up by the following (possibly more current) registration

No registrations found.

### Other (possibly less up-to-date) registrations in this register

No registrations found.

### In other registers

| Register | ID             |
|----------|----------------|
| CCMO     | NL70618.042.19 |