

# Cystic Fibrosis Research News

**Title:**

Clinician perspectives on assessing for disordered eating and body image disturbance in adolescents and young adults with cystic fibrosis

**Lay Title:**

Clinician Perspectives on Assessing for Disordered Eating and Body Image Disturbance in Adolescents and Young Adults with Cystic Fibrosis

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**What was your research question?**

The purpose of this study was to determine if Cystic Fibrosis (CF) providers believe disordered eating and body image disturbance are important things to consider in adolescents and young adults with CF, as well as to determine if they feel comfortable screening for these issues. Finally, we wanted to identify barriers to screening and opportunities to improve care in this area.

**Why is this important?**

People with CF tend to be thin because of issues absorbing fat in the foods that they eat. Maintaining a healthy weight has always been a focus of CF care. With the recent development of highly effective modulator therapies (e.g. Trikafta), people with CF are now gaining weight more easily than they had in the past. This may have the unintended consequence of changes in body image and may lead to possible disordered eating behaviour. Given the importance of good nutrition in the overall health of CF patients, it is vital that CF providers are aware of these topics and feel comfortable bringing up these issues with their patients. It is equally important that patients feel they are able to discuss these topics with their providers.



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## **What did you do?**

We created and distributed a survey to United States CF providers (Doctors including Pulmonologists, Gastroenterologists, Endocrinologists; Social Workers; Dietitians, Psychologists; Nurses; Physical and Respiratory Therapists). The survey asked how important providers felt disordered eating and body image disturbance were in adolescents and young adults with CF, how comfortable they felt screening for these issues, and how often they actually screened in their daily practices. We also asked participants to identify why they do not screen and which resources would help them feel more comfortable in this area.

## **What did you find?**

We found that providers believed that body image disturbance and various disordered eating behaviours were important issues in the adolescent and young adult CF population. However, many did not feel comfortable screening for these issues, and even fewer actually brought up these topics with their patients in their daily practices.

## **What does this mean and reasons for caution?**

We need improved resources on these topics so that CF providers feel more comfortable discussing these issues with their patients.

## **What's next?**

Going forward, it will be important to create screening tools and educational resources for CF providers on these topics. Potential ideas proposed by our participants include standardized screening tools, national guidelines, and provider training sessions at national meetings.

## **Original manuscript citation in PubMed**

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