Disordered Eating in the Collegiate Athlete: What Don’t We Know?  
Lachman, M., Coogan, T.; Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, MA  

**Context:** Athletes have a higher risk of disordered eating (DE) than the rest of the population, with a prevalence estimated to be as high as 62% among females and 33% among males (Bonci, C.; Bonci, L.; Granger, L.; Johnson, C.; Malina, R.; Milne, L.; Ryan, R.; Vanderbunt, E., 2008). Disordered eating among athletes is evolving, however the research is not. There remain many gaps in the literature regarding disordered eating in collegiate athletes.  

**Objective:** The purpose of this study is to identify the gaps in the literature regarding disordered eating in the collegiate athlete that need to be further investigated using current peer reviewed literature.  

**Data Sources:** Data has been found through the EBSCOhost search engine from within the past six years as well as the National Athletic Trainers Association and American College of Sports Medicine position statements. Key words such as “collegiate athletes”, “disordered eating”, and “athletes” were used to find relevant sources.  

**Study Selection:** Studies were selected based on their relevance to the subject manner, credibility, and validity.  

**Data Extraction:** Data was extracted from sources regarding prevention and detection of disordered eating in the collegiate athlete population. Specifically, the sociological and psychological risk factors associated with being a collegiate athlete.  

**Data Synthesis:** Research was identified as athlete specific or non-athlete specific as well as age relevant. The research that was collected was reviewed and the gaps and missing information was identified based on previous research. Any information or data that overlapped among studies was noted.  

**Conclusions:** The acknowledgement of the increased risk for DE in the collegiate athlete population has lead to subsequent questions regarding the reasons for the increased incidence. Gaps in the literature remain regarding why this increased incidence exists. It is unidentified as to what specific factors are causing otherwise healthy collegiate athletes to resort to such unhealthy means and whether they are internal or external conflicts. It has been noted that an increased drive for thinness, social pressure, perfectionist personality, and low self-esteem has contributed to reasons for DE in collegiate athletes, but these pressures and mentalities are also abundant in the rest of the collegiate population. Collegiate athletes require greater daily energy expenditures and are constantly trying to increase performance; it is questioned if part of the increase for DE in the athletic population is a lack of education regarding nutrition. There also lacks adequate diagnostic and evaluative techniques for DE. There are few reliable and valid measures available to predict DE in athletes. Based on this research, further research is necessary to identify what specific psychological and sociological factors are contributing to the increased rate of DE among specifically athletes, as well as the development of a reliable and valid standard measurement to predict DE among collegiate athletes.  

**Word Count:** 445 words.