

## **The Role of Nutritional Management in the Treatment of Eating Disorders**

Eating disorders affect the medical, nutritional and psychological health of sufferers. Many of the psychological symptoms and all of the medical symptoms of eating disorders are a consequence of under-nutrition (Keys 1950).

ANZAED endorses national and international guidelines for the treatment of eating disorders which recommend that restoration of nutritional health is an essential part of treatment, and that dietitians with advanced level skills are the appropriate health professionals to provide the nutritional therapy (NICE 2004; ADA 2001; RANZCP 2004).

Nutritional management by a suitably qualified dietitian should be provided within a multi-disciplinary treatment approach and not as sole treatment for eating disorders.

Nutritional management should provide education about the patient's nutritional needs, and guidelines for appropriate amounts and variety of food and fluids within a normal eating pattern. Nutritional education about the physical and psychological effects of low weight, under-nutrition, binge eating and purging are important aspects of treatment in all eating disorders. Nutrition management should also include the integration of patients with eating disorders back into communal eating within their usual family and social context.

In weight restoration of patients at risk of the re-feeding syndrome, nutritional management in conjunction with medical monitoring is essential to direct the quantities, rate and mode of feeding.

### **References**

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