

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Interactions Among Weight Status, Weight Perceptions, Stress and Dieting Behaviors in Female College Students

STUDENT: Jennifer L. Hollman

DEGREE: Master of Science

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The purpose of this thesis was to determine relationships among dieting behaviors, stress, weight status, and weight perceptions in college undergraduate females. Individuals who were overweight/obese reported significantly higher eating in response to emotions and stress as well as reduced ability to change a situation, manage one's emotional reaction, or cope effectively than their underweight/normal weight peers. Also, those who were overweight/obese used significantly more total methods for weight loss. Individuals who were more likely to use food to cope also used a higher number of restraint methods of dieting as well as non-diet methods than those who were less likely to use food to cope. Perceived healthy and perceived attractive weight, as percents of current weight, were significantly lower for overweight/obese individuals than for those who were underweight/normal weight. Results from this study illustrate that weight status is associated with dieting behaviors, emotional eating, and weight perceptions.