Anorexia Nervosa: The Skeleton Disease

Anorexia Nervosa is one of the most deadly diseases listed in the DSM-5. There are two types of Anorexia the restricting type and the bulimic type. Even though it seems to be a petty disease you would be surprised how many people suffer from this eating disorder. About one and 200 females suffer from Anorexia Nervosa in the united states alone and about 6% of the cases are so severe that it is fatal. Men can also suffer from AN, but it is more prominent amongst women. Anorexia is very hard to control and recover from, and many people are not able to be cured.

Anorexia Nervosa can cause an individual to be anxious and depressed about their weight. They start to eat less and less if they think they are gaining any weight from their diet even if they are not. Many who suffer wear baggy clothes to hide or to even stay warm from the excessive weight loss. They often say they are not hungry or they have already eaten to avoid eating altogether. Some will even take their food to there bedroom and dispose of it in the toilet or hide the meal under their beds. Many women even lose their monthly periods due to malnutrition which is called Amenorrhea. This is due to the body not getting enough energy to run each function of living properly. The body has to prioritize which functions need the energy the most and sends it there leaving the rest of the functions inactive. Women who suffer from Anorexia and who have Amenorrhea have more absorbent of their bone tissue a process called bone resorption. The effects of this can be compared to the after-effects of menopause. Although they down the same damage to your bones women who suffer from anorexia can suffer more severely. The somatic symptoms of Anorexia Nervosa usually makes it hard to function in everyday life. Those symptoms may include body pain, fainting, fatigue, and dizziness.

Anorexia is not a newly discovered disease. It has been around for thousands of centuries. The word Anorexia Nervosa comes from two words in Greek which translate to “lack of appetite”. Traces of anorexia can be found as far back as the first century. Each year 30 million people suffer from different eating disorders, and about 0.9% of women will experience Anorexia Nervosa in their lifetime. Amongst the individuals with Anorexia 25% of them are male. Anorexia affects approximately 8 out of 100,000 people each year. The average of new cases of Anorexia in young women is about 1%. Anorexia ranks number one in deaths above any other disorders classified in the DSM-5.

The exact causes of Anorexia are still unidentified, but as known with most psychological diseases we can be pretty sure that the causes are centered around biological, psychological, and environmental factors. When someone develops Anorexia their brain is telling them that the weight that they are currently at is unacceptable. It does not matter how much weight they shed the brain will always think that more fat needs to be lost. If you were looking at this disease from a biological standpoint you would conclude that the brain has an imbalance that blocks the craving of food for the body to receive the nutrition it needs. One's environment can influence their outlook on life more than we know. Feeling self-conscious and comparing your body size to your peers is an effective way to not feel good about your appearance. When a young girl only sees skinny women in the media as movie stars and supermodels they start to question the real standards of beauty. Hollywood is not necessarily kind to bigger girls and they are not usually cast as lead roles unless the script is specifically written for a bigger girl.

Memory loss, Body Dysmorphia, and obsession are all cognitive symptoms of anorexia nervosa. The lack of nutrition your brain is receiving while you are sick with anorexia nervosa is highly slim. This can affect brain functions and make your brain not function normally. The brain will make sure the parts of your brain that need the most nutrients get theirs by taking nutrients from the other parts of your brain and putting them there. The part of the brain that controls memory get fewer nutrients when the person is Anorexic, and this can cause memory loss. Body Dysmorphia is when you see a flaw on your body and you obsess about it to the point where your brain exaggerates it. With Anorexia you obsess at the fact you that you feel fat. Obsession is common and could make Anorexia Nervosa and Obsessive-Compulsive disorder go hand and hand. People with Anorexia are obsessed with being skinny. Being skinny to them is perfect and they want to be perfect.

To tie back into the causes of this disease, the culture, and environment a person lives in will influence them on a deep level. Some people base their everyday lives on culture. The effect mass media has on anyone's everyday life is probably the most influential. Skinny girls were glorified in the media at one point in time. Being noticeably bigger was deemed as unattractive. Sayings like “does my butt look fat in these jeans” or “I’ll just have a salad” were common phrases of the late 90s and early 2000s. As of recent years, girls of all sizes have become so comfortable in how they are, and in the media women of all sizes are represented. Many celebrities have come forward to admit that they have struggled with Anorexia Nervosa. A big name such as Zayn Malik from One Direction has been open with his story revealing that while he was touring he would go a few days at a time without eating a single meal. Demi Lovato, Lady Gaga, and Paula Abdul are just a few who have also come forth to encourage those who suffer to get the help they deserve. Celebrities and influencers on social media have gotten curvier over the years. Although having a bigger butt is seen as more attractive having a flat stomach is still a standard. The obsession of being fit and healthy on social media can be extremely motivating and influential but this can also discourage some people because their body does not look like the influencers.

When treating this disease successful outcomes are not expected. Anorexia Nervosa is an extremely hard disease to overcome completely. The most effective treatments for anorexia nervosa include but are not limited to psychotherapy, medication, nutrition counseling, and lastly in and outpatient care. Psychotherapy is commonly used with patients with AN. Regular counseling sessions to talk about past traumas and the possible reason why the patient has Anorexia can be a strong foundation for recovery. Nutrition Counselors are a great resource to encourage better eating patterns and to build and better relationship with food all around. Medical Marijuana has been used to promote better eating habits with AN patients. A certain chemical in cannabis promotes hunger and stimulates your mind to obtain an appetite and crave food. Actual medicine taken by patients does not necessarily treat anorexia but they help treat other diseases that people with AN may also suffer from which include depression and anxiety. A psychiatrist will prescribe antidepressants or and antipsychotics. When conditions at home are not up to par with the recovery of the patient with AN hospitalization will become essential. Consistent observation of the patient will be in a sense force to recover.

In Conclusion Anorexia Nervosa along with all other food disorders are amongst the most deadly disorders that you can be diagnosed with. Food is an energy source that the body needs for survival. When that energy source is hindered the body begins to shut down and the results could be fatal. Anorexia should not be taken as a joke because the patient who has it could be struggling severely.