

Body Mass Index and Healthcare Avoidance Among Women: The Role of Self-Compassion as a Moderator

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Self-Compassion Does Not Moderate the Relationship Between Body Mass Index and Healthcare

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INTRODUCTION

- 36.7% of female and 21.4% of trans/gender non-conforming college students are overweight or obese (American College Health Association, 2023)
- BMI and healthcare avoidance are positively correlated (Wetzel et al., 2023)
- There must be moderating variables involved in this relationship. One such variable may be self-compassion.

METHOD

Participants

- 432 participants
- Mean age = 23.7 (SD = 7.23), range = 17-58
- BMI mean = 26.17 (SD = 6.59), range = 15.33 – 26.17
- 1.4% male, 94.4% female 3.5% non-binary, 7% other
- White = 65.1%; Other 9.9%, African-American/Black 8.2%, Native American/Alaskan Native = 4.1%; Asian-American/Asian = 3.4%; Middle Eastern/North African = .5%;
- 42.1% identified as Hispanic/Latinx, 57.9% identified as not

Measures

- **Demographic Questionnaire** - Items assessed were age, gender identity, race, ethnicity, year in school, height, and weight.
- **Self-Compassion Scale (SCS)** - This 26-item measure assesses self-compassion. This item contains 6 subscales: self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification. Higher scores indicate higher self-compassion for all subscales.
- **Healthcare Avoidance** – 5-item scale assessing healthcare avoidance. Higher scores indicate greater levels of healthcare avoidance

Procedures

- Undergraduate students completed a series of online questionnaires for course credit

RESULTS

Table 2
Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations among Constructs

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. BMI									
2. Healthcare Avoidance	-.04								
3. Self-kindness	.02	-.12*							
4. Self-judgment	-.12*	-.16***	.46***						
5. Common Humanity	.04	-.09	.57***	.07					
6. Isolation	-.1	-.2***	.27***	.74***	.04				
7. Mindfulness	.08	-.14**	.71***	.21***	.066***	.11*			
8. Over-identification	.08	-.19***	.32***	.77***	.06	.72***	.20***		
9. Self-Compassion Total Score	.05	-.2***	.78***	.81***	.52***	.71***	.64***	.75***	
Mean	26.17	12.74	14.1	12.9	12.39	11.25	12.14	10.65	73.44
SD	6.59	3.86	4.12	4.66	3.29	3.66	3.02	3.70	16.05

Note. N = 432. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Correlations

- Self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, over-identification, mindfulness, and self-compassion total scores were negatively correlated with healthcare avoidance (high scores on each subscale equals great self-compassion).

Moderation Analyses

- Although the models for self-judgment, isolation, mindfulness, overidentification, and self-compassion total scores were significant, the conditional effects of the predictor and moderators were significant.
- The interaction between self-compassion and its components did not significantly predict healthcare avoidance.

DISCUSSION

- Self-Compassion and its components did not moderate the relationship between BMI and healthcare avoidance.
- Future studies could investigate other possible moderators involved in this relationship
- Possible limitations are the sample was taken from one university and there were very few men involved in the study.



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