

# **Eating Disorders from a gender perspective: disease, or part of life?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation deals with a problem of „eating disorders“, which are defined in medical literature, media and magazines as psychological disease, which relates to pathological way of dealing with food, body and himself/herself. It shows that that this area is not neutral from the gender point of view; eating disorders are usually women´s matter. Based on semi-structured interviews within the framework of qualitative research, this work analyses opinions of women, who have experience with this, especially their experience of their physicality and daily life. It is also focused on how women perceive the presentation of eating disorders, which concerns them, in media, medical publications and society and how they interpret their status as those who are recovering from this illness. Women´s testimonies point at the fact that their surroundings look at them as persons defined through their illness, as persons, who are exclusively connected with pathology and stigma. This view of surroundings, media and specialists, however, omit the diversity of human identities. It shows that women alone can interpret their experiences in different way. They perceive their eating disorder in the context of dominant discourse as disease, their subjective perception, however, connects it with strengthened status, which is part of their life.

**Key words:** Eating disorder, gender, pathology, everyday life, femininity, feminist theories