

Nutrition, emotional awareness and sexuality, and occupational wellness are associated with healthy weight status in emerging adults

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Background:

- Obesity is increasingly prevalent among emerging adults
- Health promotion strategies may help; little is known about the relationships between wellness and body weight status
- **Study Aim:** To examine the association between wellness dimensions and weight status in emerging adults

Methods:

Design: Cross-sectional data from health assessments completed by 374 postsecondary students (age: 17-26 years)

Measures:

- **Outcome:** BMI, dichotomized as 18.5 to 24.9, and ≥ 25 kg/m²
- **Independent variable:** Wellness dimensions (National Wellness Institute's TestWell Wellness Inventory) score based on 10 dimensions (Table 1). Scores were categorized as excellent/good (30-50), and needs improvement (<30)
- **Covariates:** Age, sex, ethnicity, living situation
- **Analysis:** Descriptive, bivariate, and binary logistic regression; $p < 0.05$



Results:

- Most participants were in their first year (72%) of studies, around 19 years, female (80.3%), had healthy weight status (77.3%), non-Caucasian (63.3%), and lived with other people (87.4%)
- **Bivariate analysis:** Association between emotional awareness and sexuality in relation to BMI ($t=-2.99$, $p=0.003$)
- **Binary Logistic Regression (Table 1):** Likelihood of having a healthy BMI increased when the scores for nutrition (aOR=2.3, 95% CI 1.05-5.02, $p=0.037$), emotional awareness and sexuality (aOR=2.68, 95% CI 1.07-6.74, $p=0.036$), and occupational wellness (aOR=2.07, 95% CI 1.02-4.19, $p=0.044$) were higher

Table 1: Adjusted odds ratios for weight status by wellness dimensions (reference category: needs improvement)

Variable	aOR (95% CI)	p-value
1. Physical fitness	1.11 (0.52-2.39)	0.789
2. Nutrition	2.30 (1.05-5.02)	0.037
3. Self-care	0.58 (0.31-1.09)	0.092
4. Environmental wellness	0.58 (0.32-1.03)	0.064
5. Social wellness	1.61 (0.84-3.08)	0.152
6. Emotional awareness & sexuality	2.68 (1.07-6.74)	0.036
7. Emotional management	0.67 (0.36-1.24)	0.197
8. Intellectual wellness	0.57 (0.31-1.05)	0.071
9. Occupational wellness	2.07 (1.02-4.19)	0.044
10. Spirituality & values	0.74 (0.40-1.39)	0.348

Conclusions:

Among health promotion efforts targeted at emerging adults, factors such as nutrition, fostering good relationships, and work-life balance may help with healthy weight maintenance in post secondary years.