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Anorexia, bulimia

A&M students not immune to eating disorders

By **LEN BRILEY**
 Reporter

They are achievers and "go-getters". They may be your classmates or your neighbors.

They are anorexics and bulimics — sufferers of eating disorders — and their numbers at Texas A&M are consistent with averages at colleges across the United States, says Dr. Judy McConnell, a counseling psychologist with Student Counseling Services.

Anorexia nervosa is the willful starvation in pursuit of slenderness. Anorexics claim to feel fat when they actually are not overweight.

Bulimia is a psychological craving for food which results in uncontrollable eating, often followed by vomiting.

Bulimics are excessively concerned about their weight.

At least 20 percent of the nation's college women are bulimic and at least 1 percent are anorexic.

Pressure to succeed often leads to these disorders in college women, McConnell says.

"It's a way people deal with stress," she says. "Some people run, and some people use food."

While anorexics and bulimics strive to fulfill the expectations of their parents or peers, McConnell says, they actually are competing with their own expectations.

One of their expectations is being perfect in and out of the classroom. "They compete with an image they themselves build," she says.

Often sufferers' families expect them to succeed when other siblings have failed, McConnell says.

She adds that there is a high incidence of alcohol abuse in sufferers' families, although alcohol abuse is only one of many causes.

Anorexia and bulimia are a problem because of our society's preoccupation with being thin, McConnell says.

"When we form stereotypes of people," she says, "we give them attributes they may not actually have."

"When we look at a thin person, we believe they are in control. When we look at a fat person, we believe they are out of control."

McConnell says anorexics and bulimics use food to gain control of their lives.

"It's an escape from feeling bad about themselves," she says. "Along with a need to feel in control, they may have low self-esteem, addiction to perfection and a distorted body image, she says."

They also develop a denial or a lack of awareness of such body needs as hunger.

Anorexics have eating rituals, McConnell says, often eating alone or occasionally with small groups.

Unlike anorexics, bulimics generally appear to eat in a normal manner when not on an eating binge.

While the mortality rate of bulimics is undetermined, between 25 percent of anorexics even die from such complications as bingeing, McConnell says.

Anorexia and bulimia are not women's problems, McConnell says. However, she says, men suffer from their preoccupation with being thin and control in different ways.

Although excessive exercise is characteristic of both men and women with these diseases, men more often devote themselves to organized sports.

She adds that the number of men afflicted with anorexia and bulimia are on the rise.

Student Counseling Services handles both men and women anorexia and bulimics on an individual and group basis.

"There's often a lot of underlying depression in these people," she says. "We try to relieve their depression — sometimes with anti-depressants, sometimes not."

"We also work on a realistic image for them."

They are encouraged to develop strong interpersonal relationships and to be independent, she says.

Girl's murderer still eludes investigators one year later

Associated Press

MESQUITE — A far-flung search fueled by widespread publicity turned up the body of a missing child, but her killer remains a mystery a year later.

Following the abduction of Christi Lynn Meeks last January, dozens of police officers converged on the Mesquite neighborhood where she was last seen playing. Helicopters circled the area for days, and volunteers met at shopping centers to search nearby fields.

Christi's kindergarten picture, plastered on leaflets, billboards, milk cartons, grocery sacks and national television prompted hundreds of tips.

Her decomposed body was found three months later in Lake Texoma, but investigators marking the crime's year anniversary still do not have an arrest or a strong suspect.

"I want to get the guy and put him in jail," Mesquite police officer

"This (case) will be with us until we're dead or we've figured it out. You can't forget..."

— **Bruce Bradshaw, Mesquite police officer.**

Bruce Bradshaw said. "This (case) will be with us until we're dead or we've figured it out. You can't forget something like that."

The strongest link to the child's abductor is a composite sketch based on descriptions provided by six elementary school children, investigators said.

The children, who were playing with Christi outside her mother's apartment complex the evening she disappeared, told police they remembered seeing a brown-haired,

medium-built young man.

Although the composite drawing and widespread distribution of Christi Meeks' photograph spurred a proliferation of tips to police, it withstood further investigation.

Hopes of finding the child ended last April. Initially identified as the body of a boy when found in Lake Texoma, the decomposed corpse was identified as that of Christi two weeks later after a change of clothing were recognized.

Lt. Larry Sprague, who heads investigation, said investigators thought finding her body would provide crucial clues. Instead, discovery of the body more than 100 miles away from where she disappeared raised more questions.

Nine months after the body was found, Mesquite still has three officers working on the case.

"From day one, we have been praying for that break," Sprague said.

Texas legislator celebrates 25th year in U.S. Congress

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez, who is celebrating 25 years in Congress this year, has always taken up the cause of the outsider, New York Gov. Mario Cuomo says.

"Henry Gonzalez's politics have been the politics of inclusion," Cuomo told about 1,200 people attending a 25th anniversary banquet for the San Antonio congressman Saturday night.

"He is forever taking up the cause of the outsider, the immigrant, the oppressed," Cuomo said in his keynote address.

Cuomo said he agreed to speak at the event as a favor to House Majority Leader Jim Wright, who also was on hand for the festivities. He denied his appearance in San Antonio was aimed at achieving more exposure for a possible bid for the presidency in 1988.

But San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros said he normally would be expected to introduce Cuomo as possibly the next president of the United States. Cisneros said Cuomo

asked him not to make such an introduction, but the mayor said the statement "might very well be true."

Cuomo has said he plans to run for re-election to the governorship this year, but he has not ruled out a presidential bid.

In his tribute to Gonzalez, Cuomo likened his own background to that of the San Antonio congressman.

"I don't think the view of the world I had growing up in South Jamaica, Queens, New York, was any different than Henry Gonzalez's was growing up on the West Side of San Antonio," Cuomo said.

"I came here tonight thinking how well those two boys have done," Cuomo said.

"Henry Gonzalez has fought to make the American dream available to everyone," he said.

Gonzalez assured his supporters, who paid \$100 each to attend the dinner, "This is not a retirement party. We have continued challenges ahead."

Gonzalez first was elected to Congress Nov. 4, 1961. He was the first Hispanic congressman from Texas.

Gainesville crash victim identified

Associated Press

GAINESVILLE — Two Texas men and one from Runaway Bay, Texas, were identified Saturday as the three people killed in the crash of a single-engine aircraft in a rural field near Gainesville.

Nicholas Oliver, 30, of Runaway Bay; Roy Will, 30, of Salina, Kan.; and Mark Nelson, 24, of Salina and the plane's pilot, died Friday when their aircraft crashed and burned about eight miles south of Gainesville, said Cooke County Justice of the Peace Royce Martin.

"I am ruling them accidental deaths due to multiple external bodily injuries," Martin said.

Cooke County Sheriff John Patton said the aircraft apparently tried to land about 10 a.m. in a grassy field, but its nose clipped a ditch and flipped over.

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