



## Prof. dr. Tim Walsh and Prof. dr. Hans Wijbrand Hoek Eating Disorders: Looking Ahead

The two speakers will give short introductions followed by an interactive discussion with the audience regarding changes likely to occur in the near future in our knowledge about and treatment of eating disorders. Both Walsh and Hoek participated in the development of the Eating Disorder section of the DSM-5 (2013) and the DSM-5 Text Revision (2022). The diagnostic categories describing eating disorders will continue to evolve. The official introduction in DSM-5 of ARFID and of BED appears to have been broadly embraced by clinicians and researchers. However, future research is needed to clarify important details about Atypical Anorexia Nervosa, ARFID and BED. For example, one of the (few) significant differences between ICD-11 and DSM-5 is that the DSM-5 definition of a binge episode requires the consumption of an objectively large amount of food while the ICD-11 does not.

In the last decade there has been a significant increase in the incidence of anorexia nervosa among 10 to 14-year old girls in the Netherlands compared to the previous three decades. Moreover, there is an unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic reported on the occurrence and burden of eating disorders. One of the very few good things to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic is the shift to providing care remotely via secure video links. Efforts to do so had begun before the pandemic but were dramatically accelerated and likely will continue. This development may offer a solution to the long-standing and well-known problem of the dissemination of expert eating disorders treatment.

It is still striking that our treatment interventions – such as CBT-E – for bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder are quite successful, while those for anorexia nervosa are still unacceptably poor. Among people with eating disorders males, older females, and persons from minority groups are even more under detected than among persons with an eating disorder as a whole. Men with eating disorders suffer from a double stigma: not only do they have a mental disorder, but also a disorder which is generally considered to be a “female” disorder. Middle aged women with eating disorders form another group who are rarely seen in specialist centers. Periods of transition show to be vulnerable phases in the course of aging in women; analogous to puberty, menopause seems to be such a critical period associated with hormonal and appearance changes. Eating disorders are also still under detected among non-white ethnic and sexual and gender minority populations and it is important that the ED field will give them more attention in the near future.