

EATING DISORDERS

Summary

Anorexia nervosa, *bulimia nervosa*, binge eating, and other unspecified eating disorders (e.g. nocturnal eating, pica) are classified as mental or emotional illnesses, where the complex of genetic, biological, and environmental factors is the key for pathogenesis. Eating disorders most often affect girls and young women, but occur in adults, and disorganize their mental and social life for many years, causing death in most cases of anorexia. The most hazardous effects of eating disorders are: weakening of the skeleton, deregulation of endocrine system (growth retardation and changes in reproductive system therein), and brain dysfunctions, being the consequence of electrolyte imbalances (eg. hy-

pokalemia, hypocalcemia) and nutrients deficiency as pathophysiological complications of starvation, excessive vomiting or laxative and diuretic misuse. The treatment of eating disorders relies on a multidisciplinary approach, including medical, nutritional, social and psychological components, but the cognitive behavioural therapy plays a fundamental role. Complexity of physiological and environmental factors, and young people susceptibility to negative aspects of theirs, and using food as a self-expression implement, lead to an increase in morbidity of appetite diseases. Therefore methods of course and the multidirectional secondary healthcare must be improved permanently.