

Differences in spinal posture and movement between adult females with anorexia nervosa and age- and sex-matched normal-weight controls.

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Journal of Clinical Medicine 14: 3723, 2025.

Background: anorexia nervosa is an eating disorder characterised by distorted eating behaviour, physical and mental health problems, and the highest mortality rate among psychiatric disorders. Although anorexia nervosa appears to be associated with alterations in the spine, studies investigating the characteristics of spinal postures and mobility in individuals with anorexia nervosa are scarce to date. The present study aims to examine the relationship between anorexia nervosa and spinal posture and mobility by comparing people with anorexia nervosa to age-matched, normal-weight controls.

Methods: spinal posture and mobility were evaluated using a radiation-free back scan, the Idiag M360 (Idiag, Fehraltorf, Switzerland). Between-group differences were assessed using a two-way analysis of variance.

Results: Adult females suffering from anorexia nervosa exhibited reduced lumbar [difference between groups (Δ) = 10.5°, 95% CI 4.6°-16.5°, $p < 0.001$] and thoracic (Δ = 8.8°, 95% CI 2.4°-15.2°, $p = 0.007$) curvatures compared to normal-weight controls. The only difference observed in spinal movements between the two groups was thoracic flexion, which was greater in individuals with anorexia nervosa (Δ = 8.4°, 95% CI 2.1°-14.4°, $p = 0.009$).

Conclusions: These findings emphasise the need to consider spinal posture and thoracic mobility in the musculoskeletal assessment of anorexia nervosa. Interventions aimed at improving spinal postures may help to develop effective rehabilitative strategies for addressing spinal problems associated with anorexia nervosa.

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