



# Facts for Activists (or Anyone!)

In spite of the unprecedented growth of eating disorders in the past two decades, eating disorders research continues to be under-funded, insurance coverage for treatment is inadequate, and societal pressures to be thin remain rampant.

Use these attention-grabbing statistics in your legislative advocacy efforts, outreach, and education. Show others that **Eating disorders are serious, costly illnesses** that can no longer be overlooked and ignored.

- ✍ In the United States, eating disorders are more common than Alzheimer's disease (as many as 10 million people have eating disorders compared to 4 million with Alzheimer's disease).
- ✍ Despite its prevalence, there is inadequate research funding for eating disorders. Funding for eating disorders research is approximately 75% less than that for Alzheimer's. In the year 2005, the National Institute of Health (NIH) funded the following disorders accordingly:

<u>Illness</u>	<u>Prevalence</u>	<u>Research Funds</u>
Eating disorders:	10 million	\$12,000,000*
Alzheimer's disease:	4.5 million	\$647,000,000
Schizophrenia:	2.2 million	\$350,000,000

\* *The reported research funds are for anorexia nervosa only. No estimated funding is reported for bulimia nervosa or eating disorders not otherwise specified.*

- ✍ Anorexia nervosa is more expensive to treat than schizophrenia, yet insurance coverage for treatment is exceedingly insufficient. The average direct medical costs for treating anorexia nervosa is \$6054 a year compared to \$4824 a year for schizophrenia.
- ✍ Research dollars spent on eating disorders averaged \$1.20 per affected individual, compared to \$159 per affected individual for schizophrenia.
- ✍ The average direct medical costs for treating eating disorder patients in the *United States* is currently between \$5-6 billion per year, whereas the *global* cost of anti-psychotic medication is \$7 billion per year.
- ✍ Anorexia nervosa has the highest premature mortality rate of any psychiatric disorder. The majority of deaths are due to physiological complications.
- ✍ Although recovery from anorexia nervosa is often protracted nearly a decade, the outcome of treatment is better than for obesity or breast cancer.

## References:

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