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Human Relationships OR26-32-2



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AGENCY AND THE CHILDHOOD ORIGINS OF FEEDISM

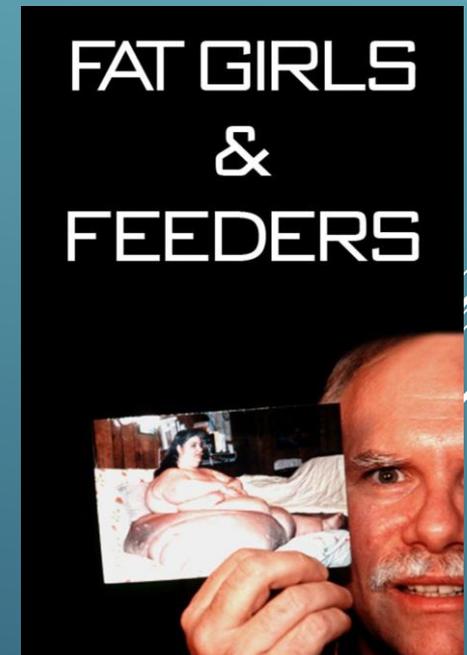
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What is 'Feedism' and how is it portrayed and understood?

Feedism is a term used to describe sexualised weight gain. Other terms are also prevalent but feedism tends to be preferred by those who participate in sexualised weight gain.

Feedism is often portrayed as a perversion or paraphilia. It has been the subject of sensational documentaries, films, and print journalism. It is often documented as something deviant and sadomasochistic.



Limited previous research

Previous research is limited.

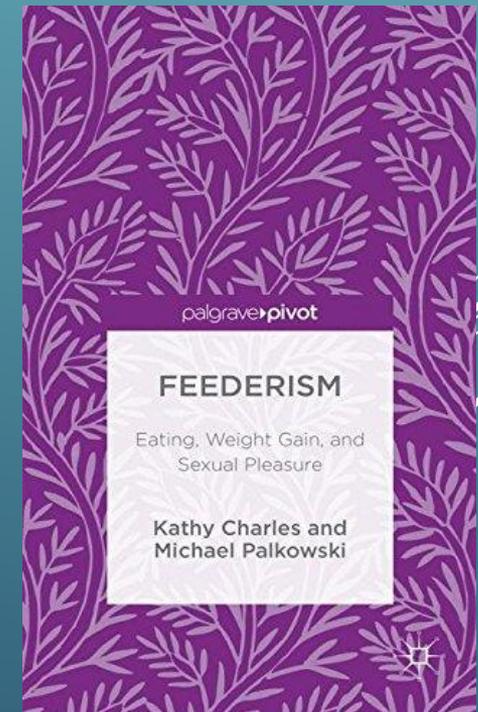
Often makes assumptions of pathology that dictate the research method.

Often uses small samples or no sample.

Often has a feminist agenda focussing on pornography or extreme cases.

Surprisingly little research has made an effort to interview a range of feedism participants and to hear the diversity of experience.

Today I will discuss the findings from research using 23 participants and I will discuss how these findings can be used by health professionals



Method

Semi-structured interviews with 23 participants (11 female, 12 male) followed by thematic analysis.

Fourteen interviews were conducted via Skype, two participants were interviewed face-to-face, and seven provided written responses to the same questions used in interviews.

Recruitment was through twitter and a blog post initially but then spread through word of mouth and other online coverage.

Recruitment had to stop due to publishing deadlines.



The emergence of three major themes

Early attraction to fat / agency / fantasy

Childhood performances and viewing of fat.

Early deceptions and early embarrassment.

The generation of fat material in drawings, animations, stories, and collected images.

Challenging the gendered and sadomasochistic narrative and language of feederism.

Women are not 'victims' of 'feeders', nor are they always 'feedees'.

'Feeders' are not always dominant and not always men.

There is role fluidity in feedism.

Feedism is not limited to heterosexual relationships.

Implications for health professionals

People involved in feedism do not want to lose weight.

Focussing solely on weight loss may cause disengagement with health professionals and health messages.

The possibility of feedism should be considered and the potential psychological benefits understood.

Focus could shift to cardiovascular fitness rather than weight.

Ways of supporting individuals who reject their feedism should be considered.

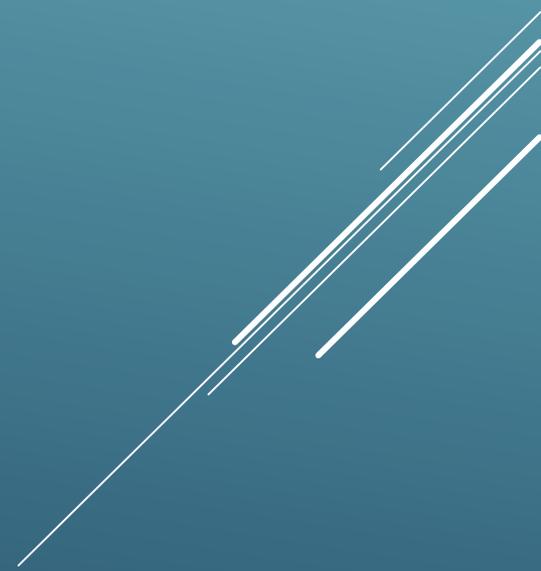


THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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