

Recommendations for the Brazilian Fashion Industry: The Work of the Brazilian Technical Commission of Groups Specialized in the Study and Treatment of Eating Disorders

The Brazilian Technical Commission of Groups Specialized in the Study and Treatment of Eating Disorders” was created in November 2006 after the tragic deaths of Brazilian fashion models, with the purpose of discussing regulatory, legal and preventive issues related to eating disorders in Brazil. This movement has been officially supported by the *Academy for Eating Disorders* (AED) President Eric F. Van Furth and the *Brazilian Psychiatric Association* (BPA).

The commission’s first important action was the adaptation of the 'AED Fashion Industry Guidelines' to the Brazilian context (which can be viewed at AED website, in its Portuguese version, in <http://www.aedweb.org/>). We aimed at producing a shorter document than the AED guidelines with emphasis on the need of an open channel of communication with the fashion industry and with greater emphasis in global health than on BMI, since one of the Brazilian girls that recently died of an eating disorder had a BMI around 18.5 kg/m². In this article we highlight the main differences between the two documents.

The Brazilian document has an introduction and seven items describing recommendations to the fashion industry (1) age threshold for models; (2) physical and mental health parameters; (3) health monitoring for models and aspiring models; (4) health promoting educational initiatives; (5) diversification of beauty patterns; (6) educational campaigns on the manipulation of photographic images and (7) establishment of collaborative channels with the government, eating disorders and eating disorders related organizations. Some of the Brazilian items are a combination of two or more AED items; others are very similar to the original AED item with slight differences in language; and some are new and were created to contemplate important aspects of Brazilian reality, such as the phenomenon of Brazilian miscegenation and varied Brazilian biotypes.

Document’s recommendations

The main differences between the AED guidelines items and the Brazilian adapted recommendations are:

- adoption of age threshold: we adopt the same age limit as the AED guideline (at least 16 years of age) but emphasize that it should be adopted for any professional activity performed by teenager models at any media vehicle (not just the catwalk; but also fashion contests – which are very frequent in Brazil; magazines; television; electronic vehicles).
- physical and mental health parameters: we adopt the same BMI limits as proposed by the AED guidelines, but as part of general health parameters. We emphasize that these nutritional criteria should be associated with the absence of other disordered eating behaviors. We propose that models should be assessed by health professionals adequately trained for the diagnosis of eating disorders and for the detection of related physical and psychological complications.
We also point out the need to discriminate healthy low weight subjects (according the World Health Organization – OMS) from those with eating disorders or risk behaviors.
- Health monitoring for models and students who are aspiring models: we specifically recommend the regular evaluation of models: the assessment of their physical, nutritional and psychological health every 6 months. Those considered to be at risk for the development of eating disorders should be referred to a specialized treatment team.
- Health promoting educational initiatives: as in the AED guidelines, we also propose the development of educational initiatives aimed at models, aspiring models and their employers to raise awareness of risks involved in non-healthy weight control behaviors. We included families of aspiring models as important targets of these initiatives.
- Inclusion of models of varying weights and body types: as the AED, we also recommend the promotion of diverse beauty patterns, but we give special emphasis on the valorization of miscegenation and of the varied Brazilian biotypes).

- educational campaigns to raise awareness about photographic manipulation: We do not propose a ban on photographic manipulation but we discourage it and we suggest that educational campaigns should inform the population of the existence of such techniques.
- establishment of collaborative channels with the government, eating disorders and eating disorders related organizations: We propose the collaboration between many levels of society in widening the availability of treatment for eating disorders as well as in developing preventive measures.

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Technical Brazilian Commission of Groups Specialized in the Study and Treatment of Eating Disorders

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