US researchers seeking 6,000+ participants for world’s largest eating disorders genetics study

Study to pinpoint genes influencing risk of developing eating disorders

Tomorrow (Tuesday, October 13), University of North Carolina (UNC) researchers will call for more than 6,000 participants aged 18 years and over, with first-hand experience of an eating disorder to enroll in the world’s largest ever genetic research study into three complex and devastating mental illnesses.

The ground-breaking Eating Disorders Genetics Initiative (EDGI) aims to identify the hundreds of genes that influence a person’s risk of developing anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder, to improve treatment, and ultimately save lives.

The UNC researchers call for study participants will coincide with the release of their survey results examining the impact of COVID-19 on Americans living with eating disorders, in which two-in-three respondents voiced concern for their mental well-being.¹

Eating disorders are complex mental illnesses that for some, can lead to severe and permanent physical complications, and even death.²,³ While various studies have explored one’s genetic predisposition to developing an eating disorder, only a handful of the responsible genes have been identified to date, leaving many more to be found.

To hear how cracking the genetic code of eating disorders will improve treatments, and save lives, tee up an interview and/or photo opportunity with:

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS  
* Denotes Spanish-speaking spokesperson

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Institution</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Professor Cynthia Bulik</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Professor Laura Thornton</strong></td>
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<td>Dr Stephanie Setliff</td>
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<td>Professor Kelly L. Klump</td>
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<td>Dr Lauren Breithaupt</td>
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**EATING DISORDER ADVOCACY GROUP REPRESENTATIVES**

- **Patti Geolat**  
  Founder, Something for Kelly Foundation & founder & CEO, Geolat Companies, **TEXAS**

- **Laura Collins Lyster-Mensh**  
  Author, Founder & Executive Director, F.E.A.S.T., **VIRGINIA**

**CELEBRITY/INFLUENCER**

- **Ginger Zee**  
  Chief Meteorologist, ABC News, dates her struggles with eating & weight back to age 10, **NEW YORK**

- **Maris Degener**  
  Yoga teacher, writer & mental health advocate who battled an eating disorder during her teens, **CALIFORNIA**

**AMERICANS WITH FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE OF AN EATING DISORDER**

- **Marybeth, 49**  
  Eating disorders advocate who has lived with anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa & binge-eating disorder, **NORTH CAROLINA**

- **Katie, 20**  
  Passionate writer & college student who has spent more than half of their life consumed by bulimia nervosa, **NORTH CAROLINA**  
  *Katie has chosen to identify with gender neutral pronouns*

- **Stacey, 48**  
  Eating disorders advocate who has lived with anorexia nervosa, **NORTH CAROLINA**

- **Manda, 33**  
  Endured 20 years between her first symptoms & receiving treatment for an eating disorder, **TEXAS**

- **Janice, 65**  
  Executive Director, Eating Disorders Resource Center (EDRC) who has battled anorexia nervosa for almost 50 years, **CALIFORNIA**

- **Erika, 30***  
  PhD student in Linguistics who was diagnosed with anorexia nervosa at 12 years of age, **CALIFORNIA**  
  *Available for Spanish interviews*

- **Maddie, 21**  
  Student who lived with anorexia nervosa throughout most of her teens, **CALIFORNIA**

- **Jacob, 25**  
  Student, avid hiker, & writer who battled anorexia nervosa for nine years, **NEBRASKA**

- **Shira, 37**  
  Nurse, eating disorder mentor, & avid hiker who has lived with three eating disorders for 23 years, **MINNESOTA**

- **Heather, 43**  
  Former ballerina, social worker & research associate who battled anorexia nervosa for 23 years, **RHODE ISLAND**

- **Amy, 50**  
  Mom who has waged a more than 30-year-long battle with anorexia nervosa, **NEW JERSEY**

- **Kelly, 29**  
  Nursing student who has lived with anorexia nervosa, **FLORIDA**

**DIGITAL MEDIA KIT + VISION**

- Digital media kit available TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13 – [edgimediakit.org](http://edgimediakit.org)
- B-roll (broadcast) vision available for download – [https://vimeo.com/464100773/35c0fa5552](https://vimeo.com/464100773/35c0fa5552)

**INTERVIEWS**

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**References**

