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**Examining the role of body image, body mass index,
body esteem, and perfectionism in anti-fat attitudes: A
comparison of gymnasium and non-gymnasium users**

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the interactions between body mass index (BMI), body image, body esteem, perfectionism, and anti-fat attitudes (AFA) within a New Zealand sample of 39 regular gymnasium (gym) users and 33 non-gym users. An online questionnaire was administered to assess BMI, body image, body esteem, perfectionism, and implicit and explicit anti-fat attitudes. Results showed high BMI was associated with greater weight dissatisfaction, regardless of gender or gym use. BMI was positively associated with body and appearance dissatisfaction, but only among non-gym users and females. Regular gym users displayed greater weight preoccupation, overall explicit AFA, and fear of weight gain, compared to non-gym users. Females reported higher appearance, body, and weight dissatisfaction, and lower overall explicit AFA, dislike of overweight individuals, and willpower, compared to males. Implicit and explicit AFA were weakly associated, except among females as implicit AFA significantly correlated with overall explicit AFA and fear of weight gain. A relationship was found between body image and explicit AFA. Specifically, high weight preoccupation correlated with greater overall explicit AFA, regardless of gender or gym use. Furthermore, high appearance and body dissatisfaction and greater weight preoccupation was associated with greater fear of weight gain. Regular gym users high in appearance investment displayed greater fear of weight gain, whereas non-gym users with greater investment in physical appearance reported greater dislike of overweight individuals. Greater weight preoccupation, body and weight dissatisfaction, and investment in physical appearance were associated with greater willpower among men, whereas only weight preoccupation correlated with willpower among women. Body image correlated with implicit AFA, but only among non-gym users and females, such that individuals with high body dissatisfaction and greater weight preoccupation displayed greater implicit AFA. No moderation or mediation effect was found for body esteem on the relationship between body image and AFA. However, perfectionism mediated the effect of body image on AFA. Specifically, maladaptive perfectionism mediated the relationship between Appearance Orientation and overall explicit AFA, Appearance Orientation and Dislike, Appearance Orientation and Fear, Overweight

Preoccupation and overall explicit AFA, and Overweight Preoccupation and Fear. Directions for future research and implications within a fitness context are discussed.

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