

Eating Disorder Prevalence in Forensic Settings

An underacknowledged issue in a vulnerable population

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Background

The **prevalence and severity of disordered eating and eating disorders** in forensic settings, including prisons, psychiatric prisons, remand centres, correctional residential facilities, and community correction orders, remains **poorly understood and under researched**.

Despite this, forensic populations are known to experience **multiple risk factors** such as trauma, mental illness, and substance use. The stress of confinement, social isolation, and limited coping strategies further increase vulnerability.

Objectives

This scoping review examined existing research on eating disorders in forensic systems (prisons, community correctional programs, residential facilities, and post-release populations). This poster reports on **prevalence rates** and **assessment measures**.

Methods



Step 1: Protocol
Registered on OSF



Step 2: Database Search

Ovid (MEDLINE & PsycINFO)
Elsevier (Scopus)
EBSCO (CINAHL)
ProQuest (Dissertations & Theses)



Step 3: Review Outputs

Studies identified
Prevalence & Measures reported

Results



28 articles identified



Most studies in prisons



8 countries represented



20 different measures used

Measures

Most frequently used tools were EAT-26 and Structured Clinical Interviews for DSM-IV

Prevalence

25 studies reported rates of ED/DE across forensic settings

Figure 1: Prevalence of Eating Disorders/Disordered Eating by Study and Measure

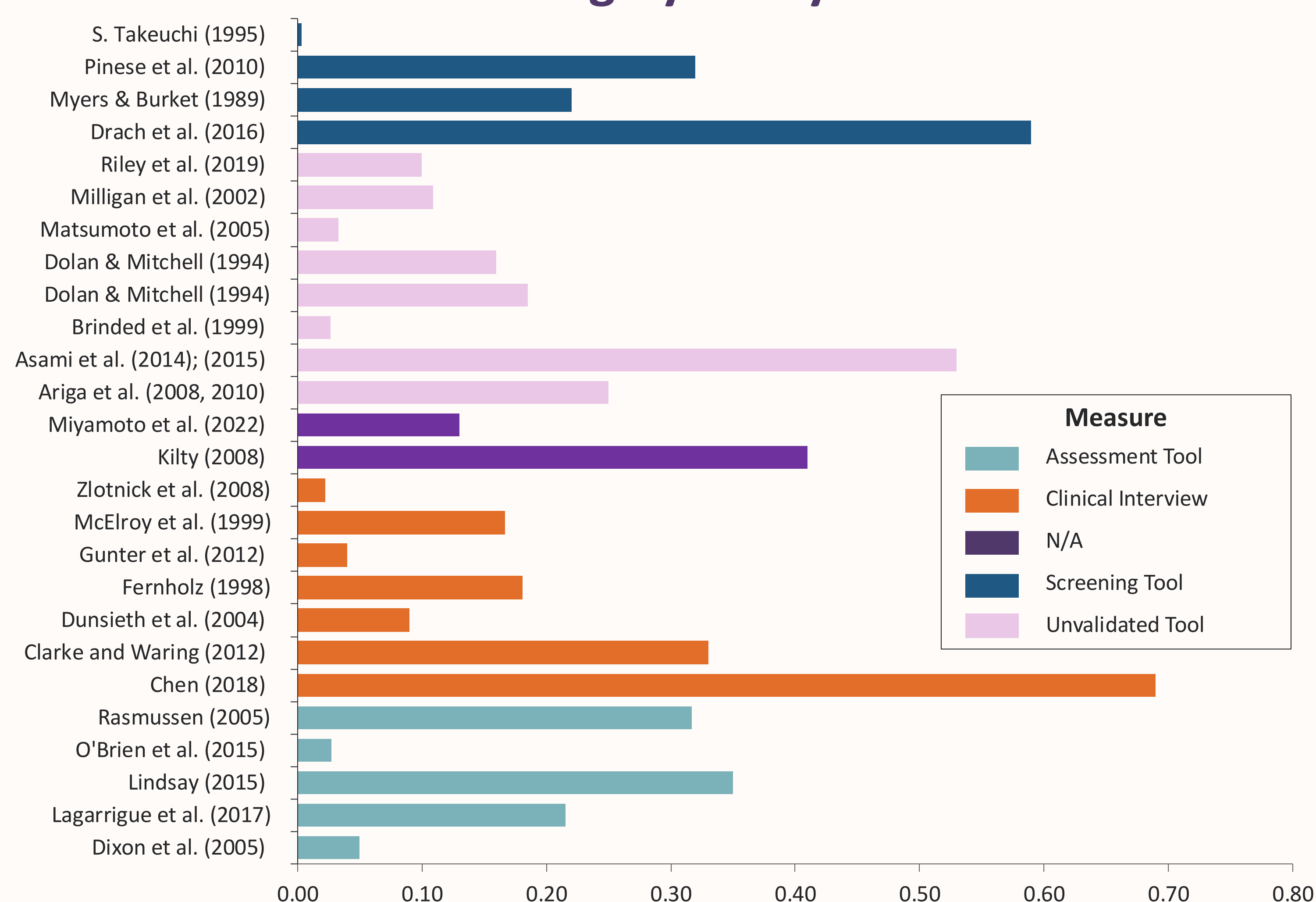
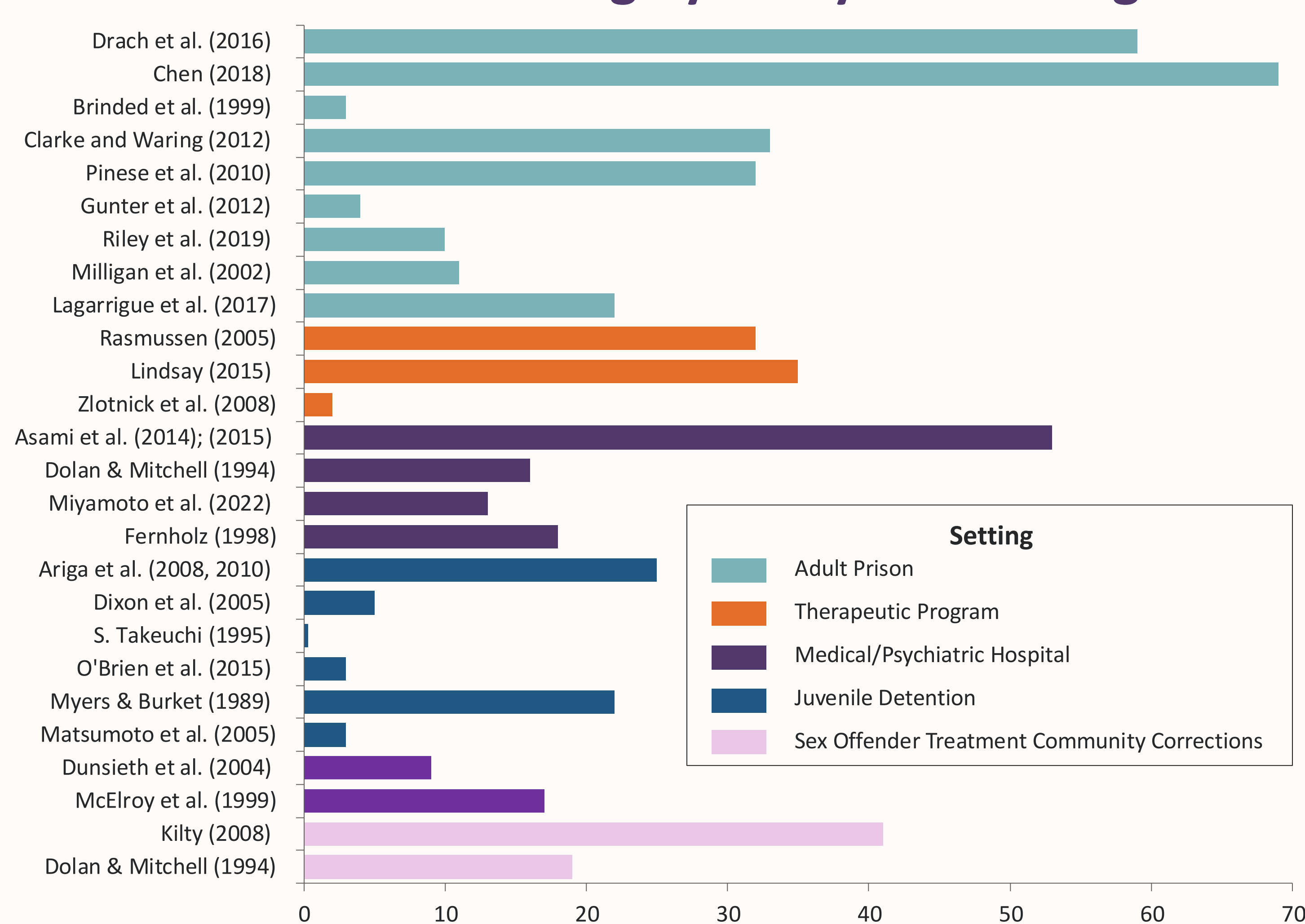


Figure 2: Prevalence of Eating Disorders/Disordered Eating by Study and Setting



Conclusions

Eating disorders in forensic settings remain **under-recognised** and **inconsistently assessed**.



Lack of recent data in forensic populations



Inconsistent screening and assessment practices



High prevalence, especially in women's prisons



Variation in rates across settings, populations, and measures



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