

THE PREVALENCE AND BURDEN OF ARFID IN THE ADULT GENERAL POPULATION OF THE UK AND USA

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A 2023 UK and USA population survey of 4002 adults found that 26.0% screened positive for Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID), revealing it as a common condition in adults associated with substantial health burden.

KEY POINTS

- One in four adults (26.0%) screened positive for ARFID using the nine-item NIAS tool, with similar prevalence in the UK (23.0%) and USA (29.0%).
- ARFID was more common in females than males (29.6% vs. 22.1%, OR 1.5) and highest in adults aged 18-39 years (31.6%), declining with age to 16.1% in those 65 years and over.
- Individuals with ARFID had significantly higher prevalence of disorders of gut-brain interaction (51% vs. 37.5%, OR 2.2), including irritable bowel syndrome (OR 3.2) and functional dyspepsia (OR 4.6).
- Those screening positive for ARFID were more likely to be underweight (7.0% vs. 1.5%), experienced greater somatic symptoms and mood disturbances, reduced quality of life, and increased healthcare utilization.
- Increasing number of ARFID domains (poor appetite, picky eating, fear of aversive consequences) was associated with greater general health impairment.

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