**Is my body trending? The Effects of TikTok on Body Dissatisfaction, Disordered Eating Attitudes and Muscle Building Behaviours**

**TikTok on the clock…**

Many of us are likely familiar with the lingering feelings of inadequacy after scrolling on social media, viewing highlight reels of other people’s lives. How might this alter the way we view ourselves? Recent research has revealed that viewing media containing unrealistic, ideal body types on social media leads to body image concerns and behavioural changes, such as disordered eating. When users view idealised images of ultra-thin or muscular bodies, some may internalise this physique, endorsing and striving to achieve it. However, as this body is often unattainable, this can leave us dissatisfied with our bodies.

One of the most popular social media apps, TikTok, is the host to billions of user-created short videos. Popular trends include dancing to popular songs, comedy sketches etc. Harmless right? Unfortunately,for every fun TikTok trend that goes viral, a potentially dangerous one accompanies it. A vast proportion of videos discuss topics relating to weight loss and fitness inspiration. As a user myself, this led me to wonder whether TikTok has similar effects on user’s body image as those seen with Instagram or Facebook. As the popularity of TikTok is rising exponentially, it was alarming to see how little is known about any psychological ramifications of TikTok use. Practically no research had quantified the effects of TikTok on body image and whether specific content may be more responsible for the development of body concern.

**The Research**

Participants completed a series of questionnaires measuring overall and content specific TikTok use, body image constructs and levels of internalisation of the thin- and muscular body ideals.

**Does TikTok have an effect on body image?**

Yes! Results showed that users spending longer on TikTok have higher body dissatisfaction. Specifically, viewing a larger volume of diet advice and influencer lifestyle videos was associated with higher body dissatisfaction. This effect was the same regardless of how much an individual internalises body ideals. Diet advice videos are a particular cause for concern, as viewing more videos of this nature displayed statistically significant increases in disordered eating attitudes as well. This relationship was stronger in the participants that internalised the thin- and muscular ideals.

Despite the negatives, viewing exercise videos on TikTok was associated with an increase in muscle building behaviours, such as exercising more. However, viewing exercise content was not associated with body dissatisfaction. Whilst in some cases these behaviours may become dangerous, this type of content may encourage adoption of healthy lifestyle changes without leaving users dissatisfied with their physique.

**Where do we go from here?**

The past few years has seen significant progress in encouraging body positivity. It is concerning to see that TikTok may regress this development. This study has begun to highlight the importance of considering this platform when developing intervention to mitigate body image concern however there are questions that remain unanswered. For example

* How do the effects seen vary between genders and ethnicities?
* Are there factors that may protect individuals from harmful effects?