*Does social media use lead to body dissatisfaction, and how does this impact on the National Health Service -NHS?*

***OBJECTIVES.***

This research paper will examine social media use and its potential links to body dissatisfaction. If such a correlation exists, it is crucial to understand how this affects National Health Service (NHS) services, particularly in terms of the added strain and pressure it may place on an already stretched system. The investigation will provide insights not only into individual mental health but also into the broader implications for public health resources.

To achieve this, the research will rely on data gathered from secondary sources, focusing on an extensive review of scholarly articles from platforms like Google Scholar, as well as relevant findings from charity organisations dedicated to mental health and body image issues (de Vries et al., 2015). By examining this information, this paper aims to present a clear picture of the current state of research in the field and determine the extent of the problem.

The paper will delve into various factors that contribute to body dissatisfaction. Among these factors, the role of cyberbullying  (Stronge et al., 2015) will be investigated. With the rise of social media platforms, online harassment has surged, with users frequently targeted based on their appearance, leading to adverse mental health outcomes and eating disorders. Understanding how bullying contributes to body image issues is critical  (Stronge et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the influence of edited images presented by celebrities and social media influencers will be scrutinised (McLean et al., 2015). The modern online environment is saturated with altered portrayals of beauty that often emphasise unrealistic expectations. Research indicates that exposure to such images can lead to unhealthy comparisons and disordered body image perceptions, especially among young people. This paper will explore how these inflexible beauty standards encourage dissatisfaction among individuals who feel they do not fit into these definitions of attractiveness  (McGovern, Collins and Dunne, 2022).

Additionally, the phenomenon of influencer-driven trends  (Uti, 2022) —ranging from exercise routines to dieting fads—will also be explored to demonstrate their potential consequences on body image issues. When influencers discuss their own fitness journeys, perhaps identifying with the struggles others may face, they can simultaneously motivate change and prolong unhealthy habits or body comparisons (Powell and Pring, 2023). This presents a complex challenge for individuals who follow such material in search of health tips (Spadine and Patterson, 2022) .

Ultimately, this research will focus on the causal relationships between social media exposure and body dissatisfaction while assessing the repercussions on healthcare services, specifically the mental health support systems within the National Health Service “NHS” (McCrory, Best and Maddock, 2020). Literature suggests that increasing rates of anxiety, depression, and eating disorders correlate with significant social media engagement, portraying a dire need for intervention. As a large portion of the population turns to social media for connection, information, and escapism, understanding these consequences will be vital as discussions surrounding mental health treatment evolve.

Eventually, the outcome of this inquiry aims to highlight how best to address the links between social media, body image, and health services. By compiling evidence-based research papers and existing literature, recommendations can be planned for healthcare professionals, policymakers and even teachers  (Yin and Chen, 2022). Association between technology platforms, mental health advocates, and healthcare systems may help provide a more supportive digital environment alongside the necessary reinforcement of NHS services, allowing for greater awareness, education, and resources targeted at combating body dissatisfaction (Grogan, 2021).

In conclusion, by critically analysing the relationship between social media, body dissatisfaction, and NHS service capacity, this research paper endeavours to not only identify existing concerns but also to propose an actionable solutions that can better prepare the healthcare system to meet the needs of individuals who are affected by these challenges in a modern, digitised world.

Methodology.

The study will examine research papers from the last 10 years and include a mixture of genders. It will also find what age range this issue is most likely to affect and what reasoning is behind it. To begin, the literature review will involve a systematic survey of peer-reviewed research articles that address the subject matter. The literature review will involve a systematic survey of peer-reviewed research articles that address the subject matter (Ahn and Kang, 2018). The systematic approach will look into, firstly, the research question, developing the question, and the strategy of how it will be explored, abstracting the data to find the results, and, finally, it will look into biases, changes, and differences. This structured framework ensures that every aspect of the literature is examined rigorously, which enhances the reliability of the findings. The initial step involves formulating a clear and concise research question that will guide the literature review. studying existing literature to identify research gaps, exploring grey literature may also be an advantage, as it could reveal overlooked studies that contribute valuable insights into the research question. This process will not only look into the similarities and differences between studies but will also help to identify patterns and trends. By analysing trends and findings across diverse studies, it will aim to identify patterns that emerge over time, revealing how different genders experience and perceive it (Marques et al., 2022). This approach recognizes that individual experiences can be significantly shaped by gender-specific social, cultural, and psychological factors. The analysis will seek to pinpoint the age range that exhibits the highest susceptibility to this issue (Saiphoo and Vahedi, 2019).  Understanding the motivations behind this phenomenon is crucial. Furthermore, it is essential to highlight existing gaps in the research, addressing these issues are important not just for academic exercise; it has real-world implications for policy-making and support services. The findings may aid in crafting new educational programs, and figuring out why it exists in the first instance.

***THE QUESTION - AIM.***

The question this review will look into is - *Does Social Media use lead to body dissatisfaction and how does this impact on the National Health Service -NHS?*

Social media platforms have become a major part of daily life for millions of people. The platforms often promote idealised images of beauty and success, which can create unrealistic standards that users feel pressured to meet. This dissatisfaction often stems from comparisons users make between themselves and the perfect lives portrayed by influencers and peers. This can lead to negativity and a low self-esteem. The implications of body dissatisfaction are far-reaching, particularly concerning mental health (Bounds, 2024). Individuals who have a negative body image may experience an increase in anxiety, have depression, and some even eating disorders. These mental health challenges not only affect personal well-being but also place a considerable burden on healthcare systems, including the NHS. Social media has a powerful effect with its impact on body image and should not be overlooked, this report hopes to address the challenges that cause this issue and how to try and prevent them by looking at how education, support, and resources can help

***CHAPTER 1 Social Media impacts.***

Chapter one will look into qualitative and quantitative literature reviews from Google Scholar. A paper has found that social media use can release chemicals in the brain such as dopamine – dopamine is a neurohormone and plays a major part in the body (Cleveland Clinic, 2022) It significantly affects movement, mood, and learning, often being referred to as a "feel-good" hormone due to its association with pleasure and reward, this is the same effect as you may get when eating chocolate, and other junk foods. It is what makes you return to social media again and again, continuously engaging users by triggering these dopamine responses, the chemical reaction causes one moment where you can feel excellent, but then moments later can make you feel negative. Looking at what favourite followers are doing and what is on trend, however, the negative side of dopamine can be issues with sleeping, mood swings and poor impulse control. Users of social media can become obsessed with likes and comments, seeking a social comparison (Bergman, 2024), thus having a negative chemical reaction in the brain almost like drug addiction. This creates an impact on overall wellbeing, affecting mostly girls between the ages of 10 and 14. Spending too long looking at other people who have filtered images and only an “online” life that seems so perfect can understandably affect someone lonely and longing for that. Someone who maybe is already suffering from cyberbullying and wants to achieve this fake lifestyle and unachievable body image. Of course, social media can have positive effects as well and can create friends provide information about services bring together neighbourhoods, however for mostly young girls the power of social media can be a struggle being bombarded with adverts promoting to have different powers, notifications “pinging” constantly, feeling watched at school, the pressure of meeting expectations can exhaust you mentally and emotionally

A research paper looking into weight loss advertisements on social media examined 2000 social media users of all genders and discovered that nine out of ten of them never achieved a picture-perfect body, leading to them feeling ashamed (Hughes, 2022). The results revealed that over half the candidates wanted to change their appearance due to filters and adverts seen on platforms, one in four would not upload any unedited pictures, and three-quarters wanted to have cosmetic surgery.

It is thought that the average person spends 108 minutes on social media. The longer time spent on platforms looking at picture-perfect lifestyles and filtered body images affects our perceptions of what is real, what is achievable and all the faults on oneself.

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

Image taken from (Origym.co.uk, 2025) . this shows what changes social media users in the research panel wanted to make about themselves. It is very easy to purchase fillers and have “lunch break” surgery  (Keystone Cosmetic Surgery Center, 2018) having spider veins removed, lip fillers, and hair removal procedures so easily available as going to a supermarket means more people are reaching out for it. Men want to improve muscle mass and hair treatments and women want more permanent procedures such as enhancements and changes to the body.

The power of social media and the rise in TikTok videos and hashtags make it much easier to compare yourself and feel these negative effects. In today's digital age, platforms like TikTok have transformed how individuals interact, express themselves, and perceive others. The use of hashtags amplifies this phenomenon by categorising content in a way that encourages users to seek out specific trends or lifestyles (Mohamed, 2023).

A social media and body image paper (Ferguson, 2024) highlighted the risks of social media and eating disorders linking this to cyberbullying – this is much harder to deal with than every day bullying because the bully can hide their identity unlike face-to-face interactions where a bully's identity is often known, online platforms allow individuals to hide behind anonymous accounts. victims may struggle to identify their aggressors or seek help effectively. in contrast to traditional bullying, which typically occurs in specific environments such as schools, cyberbullying can happen anywhere and at any time. A single comment can be seen by a vast audience, this can lead to a dangerous cycle where individuals develop eating disorders as a means of coping with their negative self-image and online criticism. The research found that teenagers were likely to see content promoting eating disorders within 8 minutes of creating a new account.  (Mollyrosefoundation, 2025) The report paper also examined dangerous habits and trends from online peer pressure, particularly highlighting alarming behaviours such as the videoing of suicides and the encouragement of risky activities like climbing towers without protective gear. In order to gain popularity people may feel compelled to engage in life-threatening actions (Memon et al., 2018). With videos of suicide or near misses, it starts to desensitise viewers, making them forget that this is real life, and the effects of bullying and social media are creating this content.

Another report looks at the rise of dentistry (Selin Saygili et al., 2024) the Turkey teeth craze (Clinics, 2022), This has gained traction among people who want a more affordable procedure whilst enjoying the sun at a fraction of the cost. the reliability of at-home teeth whitening and the dangers it is causing. which are often sold as safe and effective solutions. Unfortunately, these products can pose significant risks, including enamel erosion, increased tooth sensitivity, and potential damage to gums. Which is taking over the NHS dentistry department, with many dentists limited to how they can reverse the effects that have already been carried out, creating challenges. The number of people looking for fixes and treatment is putting great strain on the already challenged dentistry departments. More education is needed to explain to people how bad some of the treatments are and what damage they can lead to.

***Existing Theory.***

Social comparison theory, developed in the 1950s by psychologist Leon Festinger, delves into the complex ways individuals assess themselves in relation to others (ResearchGate, 2024). This theory suggests that individuals have a built-in drive to assess their own abilities, achievements, and overall worth by comparing themselves to those around them. There are negative and positive effects. Such as envy, fear and feeling inferior to others. These negative emotions can significantly impact a person's mood, motivation, and self-esteem. social comparison can also serve as a source of hope and motivation; when individuals engage in upward comparisons—comparing themselves to those who are perceived to be better off, feeling of inspired to improve their own circumstances or strive for personal growth. Upward comparison occurs when individuals compare themselves to others who, they believe, are more successful or possess qualities they aspire to achieve. While this can lead to feelings of inadequacy or envy, it can also create a desire for self-improvement. There is also a downward comparison that involves looking at those who are perceived as worse off. This type of comparison can provide a temporary boost in self-esteem and provide feelings of gratitude for a person's own circumstances. In today’s digital age, where platforms often highlight curated versions of success and happiness, individuals may find themselves engaging in more frequent upward comparisons. social comparison theory provides valuable insights into how individuals assess themselves relative to others (Festinger, 1957).

Self-objectification theory, developed in 1997 by Fredrickson and Roberts, delves into the complex dynamics of how individuals perceive yourself as a third person (Winn and Cornelius, 2020). This perspective often leads to a critical examination of a person's physical appearance, where individuals scrutinise every detail of their bodies in comparison to others. Body shaming yourself can diminish self-esteem and affect overall life satisfaction.  (Bell, Cassarly and Dunbar, 2018) Social media platforms often promote unrealistic beauty standards and idealised body images. Users are frequently bombarded with curated images that portray perfect bodies, leading to an increased pressure to conform to these ideals. The focus shifts from self-acceptance and personal growth to an obsession with physical appearance. People opt to spend more time trying to create a perfect body which can affect a person's mental health, relationships, and professional success.

***CHAPTER 2, History of body image.***

Across the world, the ideal image of the perfect body changes dramatically from culture to culture and over time. An article from Good magazine took an image of a man and asked women in 19 countries to turn it into the perfect image according to their perceptions of the "perfect" male body. The results were striking, with the image being altered 19 distinct times (Carilli, 2024), From changing the shape of the body to skin tones, hair length and muscle mass to create the ideal male body. For instance, while some cultures may favour a lean physique, others might prioritise muscularity or height, demonstrating that there is no standard for what an ideal body looks like. This highlights the social pressures individuals face regarding their appearance and how these pressures can lead to feelings of inadequacy or dissatisfaction. Having access to tools like Photoshop makes it so easy to change the images to make anyone look completely different, even able to change eye colour, all help lead to this unrealistic perfect world (Rosso, n.d.).

Body image first came about by a book written by Paul Schilder who published his influential book, “The Image and Appearance of the Human Body”, in 1935 he looked into differences between image and appearance and how perceptions of the human body have evolved over time. Historically it was seen that if you had a full-figure frame you had wealth as you could afford rich foods. Conversely, different cultures thought clear skin and dark hair were considered more desirable traits, reflecting beauty standards that were deeply rooted in culture. With the rise of Hollywood and fame people started to look into what people were wearing the appearance of stars became a significant factor in personal identity and social standing. People began to look at their own bodies and compare themselves to stars on the television. Social media has reshaped the concept of the perfect image, impacting on individual self-perception and creating the perfect image. The perfect image of a body is different across the world but the image of an ideal body has been generated from the media, peers and influencers. Influencers have grown dramatically over the last few years, they have thousands of followers and people who watch their every move. these influencers often create a lifestyle that emphasises body improvements, fashion tips, and strategies on how to look one's best (jenny@jennymelrose.com, 2019).They have become modern-day icons who wield considerable power over their audiences, shaping perceptions of beauty and desirability. Influencers often present a carefully crafted version of reality that highlights certain body types whilst creating a negative ideal about other types of body image. creating a culture of comparison that can be detrimental to mental health. Influencers develop a trustworthy place for people to learn and explore areas that they feel is important to them but do not represent the full spectrum of human diversity.



 (Lara, 2023)

Looking at history, it is clear that body image has been around since before social media came about The perception of body image has always existed in various forms  (Hayward and British Library, 2007). social media has brought the issue to light as platforms have grown extremely quickly in recent years. Before computers were around people has to verbally communicate what they thought were norms conveying their beliefs about beauty norms and fashion ideals. Going to dressmakers and tailors was pivotal in shaping societal views on fashion and body image  (Toplis, 2015). Looking through magazines at high-profile celebrities and expensive clothing brands, shaping public perceptions of body image. People were inundated with images of slim figures, flawless skin, and luxurious lifestyles. This shows that social media is not just at the forefront of the blame for creating body dissatisfaction, but that with the change of technology and it being in everyone’s pocket with easy access, it has highlighted the importance of examining the broader connections of digital interactions on self-image. social media platforms have fundamentally altered how individuals perceive themselves and others. This constant exposure can create a distorted sense of reality, where users may feel inadequate or dissatisfied with their own bodies. Influencers have access to all age groups and backgrounds.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, people were largely restricted to being indoors, which significantly altered their daily routines and social interactions. This led to a notable increase in social media use, not just in the UK but across the globe (Awao et al., 2022). Gatherings, meeting people in person and community events were cancelled many turned to social media platforms as a way of communication and staying in touch. The platforms enabled individuals to maintain connections with family and friends despite physical separation. New relationships and friendships were made because social media was one of the only ways to interact with other people, creating a sense of belonging. However, it also presented significant challenges as it restricted access to support services and help needed through online bullying, mental health challenges and people who were lonely and had no one to talk to. The absence of physical social support networks left many feeling vulnerable and disconnected. The rise of Joe Wicks during COVID-19 with his videos of staying in shape and creating healthy meals had a huge impact, he created accessible videos helping children stay fit with exercises, and he helped people to understand the importance of physical activity and healthy eating. His workouts were not only designed for adults but also tailored to help children stay active through fun and interactive exercises He reached out to people on social media sites such as snap chat, Tik Tok and Facebook, he started off creating 15 second videos he evolved into one of the most recognised and followed fitness coaches globally, demonstrating the power of digital platforms in promoting health and wellness  (Hollom, 2016).

Regulating authorities in the UK, such as Ofcom, are being given more power to protect users against harmful content. Harmful content such as Images that are now becoming increasingly popular with fashion models being plus sizes for example. This shift is widely seen as a positive development in the fashion industry, as it aims to promote a more realistic and inclusive portrayal of body image. This promotes a broader range of body types. This movement encourages individuals to embrace their own bodies. While it is crucial to celebrate body positivity, it is also essential to address the potential health implications associated with being overweight. Some journals have controversially compared the promotion of plus-size models to smoking advertisements. (NZ Herald, n.d.). This comparison highlights the delicate balance between advocating for body acceptance and promoting health awareness.

Cyberbullying, terror-related videos, and abusive interactions between people and animals are all examples of harmful content that fall under this category (More Powers for Ofcom to police social media firms, 2020), as they aim to create a safer online environment for all users, particularly vulnerable groups who are often the targets of such harmful behaviour. By empowering Ofcom to oversee social media platforms, there is an expectation that incidents of cyberbullying can be more effectively monitored. n response to these regulatory changes, social media companies like Facebook have established global standards to define what constitutes acceptable behaviour on their platforms. Facebook has made changes that make it easier for users to report inappropriate or harmful content. As digital platforms continue to grow and evolve, so must the frameworks governing them.

Chapter 3, Recommendations.

It is not possible to stop how people feel about themselves just by describing the perfect healthy body image. Healthy body image is personal to everyone, and what one person finds to be healthy, another may find fault. This subject highlights the complexity of body image perceptions as they are deeply influenced by individual experiences, cultural backgrounds, and societal standards. Therefore, it is important to teach from a young age that feeling happy within your own body is the best recommendation to avoid the feelings suffered with body dissatisfaction.

There was a programme that looked into school pupils in 3 different schools, conducted an in-depth investigation into the attitudes of school pupils regarding their own bodies (Paxton, 1993). This initiative involved a series of structured interviews where pupils were asked a variety of questions aimed at uncovering their perceptions of body image. They examined fast weight loss and eating disorders relating to body dissatisfaction. Such disorders are often rooted in negative body image. Out of the three schools involved in the study, it was particularly concerning to note that on the 12-month follow up two of the schools reported an increase in the number of pupils expressing negative feelings towards themselves. Unrealistic beauty standards contribute to low self-perceptions. This shows that there is an urgent need for promoting positive body image among young people, a programme should be included in the curriculum with peer support groups over different locations to help pupils with social media body image initiatives.

If models were not airbrushed, this may help people realise that scars and other imperfections are part of everybody and make you who you are (HeinOnline, 2021). Everyone should be slightly different. By showcasing real bodies in their diverse forms, society can begin to embrace authenticity over perfection. Teaching us to appreciate unique characteristics. This could be carried out with a visual campaign where models are used in advertisements that are not airbrushed, models from different backgrounds and diversities could also be used, showing authenticity. schools could have an airbrushing master class to see how easy it is to make a person look different.

Adverts aimed at children that encourage unhealthy eating and drinking should also be regulated to protect children from developing unhealthy relationships with food. Adding cartoons to unhealthy foods, making it more desirable, shouldn’t be allowed. We need to support balanced lifestyles with positive body images. In October 2025, advertising regulations were brought about that will restrict advertising times on foods that contain high sugars, fats, and salt (HFSS). These regulations represent a significant step towards safeguarding children's health and well-being. By limiting the exposure of children to advertisements for high-fat foods from 5.30 am to 9 pm (Conway, 2024). Promoting healthier alternatives can lead to better eating habits

Social media has enlisted influencers to carry out reviews of products by live streaming. A trend that has reshaped consumer behaviour. It is becoming more common to see videos of individuals performing their own body piercings, administering Botox injections, or tattooing themselves. Now the new trend of body piercing art consists of threading ribbon through your body, joined together by piercings or over tattoos. People can watch their favourite influencers and then are able to copy by ordering what is needed directly. This is a way of manipulating viewers to buy the products and copy the influencer. People have no understanding of the implications and understand the dangers or side effects, and often the influencer has been paid to advertise and promote the products. This encourages individuals to prioritise damaging trends over their health and well-being. More awareness needs to be given to people so that they can see the dangers and have a more informed choice, and the need to regulate influencers (Antoniou, A., 2021). Public health campaigns could play a vital role in educating individuals about the dangers and risks associated with such trends. Regulating influencer marketing can help protect consumers from harmful trends. There should be a legal requirement for influencers who administer cosmetic treatments to disclose their training credentials publicly and promote that work should only be carried out by those who have completed training courses. This could create a safer environment for individuals exploring body art and beauty treatments

Conclusion

This research paper has looked into social media use and the impacts it has on body dissatisfaction and impacts on the National Health Services, and how this added strain and pressure on an already strained service. Social media serves as a primary source of information, communication, and entertainment. However, they also play a significant role in shaping individuals' perceptions of body image. The constant exposure to perfect images and idealised representations of beauty can lead to increased body dissatisfaction among users. Social media use and body dissatisfaction present a complex challenge that involves a flexible approach. Understanding how these platforms influence self-perception is crucial for developing effective interventions. Addressing these issues can lead to healthier communities and a more sustainable healthcare system in the long run.

The report highlights several key findings regarding body image and its implications. The main recommendation the report suggests is that if children are educated at a young age, about how the concept of body image can and should be different for all, then they can develop a healthier perspective of their own bodies. This understanding is crucial, as it emphasises that the notion of a "perfect body" is a myth and does not exist.  By teaching children that uniqueness is more desirable than being the same, and that surgeries should not be an option, as it can lead to unnecessary pressures. This early intervention could significantly reduce the desire to seek cosmetic treatments or surgeries in pursuit of an idealised body image. When individuals learn to appreciate their unique features and embrace their individuality, the desire to conform to a singular standard disappears. where feeling comfortable and happy in one's own skin becomes the norm rather than the exception. By promoting awareness that there is no need for surgical alterations or extreme measures to achieve an ideal body, we can create a generation that values authenticity over conformity.  This could be taught as part of the health and personal development curriculum as well as being integrated into physical education. This could be taught by using stories, role-playing, and discussion showing various body types, abilities, and cultural backgrounds. Teachers would need to have training on body image issues and how to address them sensitively, free from bias toward certain body types. Children can develop a resilience against negative body images and the pressures, and would learn to celebrate their own unique

This report's findings have looked into the extent to which social media impacts NHS services and how the rise of social media use has changed the way we view ourselves, as well as the effects this has on mental health and public perception. Through a comprehensive review of existing literature and published journals, it has become increasingly clear that the policies designed to protect users from the potential harms of social media are, in fact, failing to fulfil their intended purpose. The analysis highlights that Ofcom serves as the primary regulator overseeing these platforms; however, given the rapid expansion of social media platforms, this regulatory framework is proving inadequate. Despite the introduction of the Online Safety Bill  (GOV.UK, 2024), which aimed to set a new regulatory framework that would tackle harmful content online and would hold the tech companies accountable. The vast amount of volume of content available online makes it alarmingly easy to encounter material that is inappropriate or harmful to a wide audience, including vulnerable populations such as children and those with mental health issues. Misinformation, cyberbullying, and exposure to graphic content are frequent, raising serious concerns about user safety and well-being. As a result, it is evident that the governing body requires further support and resources to effectively manage these challenges. Relying solely on social media platforms to self-regulate is not sufficient.

The limitations of this report are significant and highlight the challenges essential in researching social media changes. As social media platforms evolve at an extraordinary pace, keeping up with the latest trends and research findings becomes increasingly difficult. The development of new features, algorithms, and user behaviours means that by the time a research paper is completed and published, the landscape may have already changed dramatically. Work can quickly become outdated, limiting its relevance and impact. There is also a noticeable lack of comprehensive studies available in this field. Existing research complicates the ability to create a precise conclusion. Once a quantitative study has started, it can be particularly challenging to adapt or modify the research framework in response to new developments or findings that emerge during the study period. This can hinder the ability to address any evolving questions. For future papers, it may be worthwhile to incorporate real-time data analytics to capture ongoing shifts in social media behaviours. Acknowledging these limitations is important for advancing our understanding of social media's impact on society and the NHS.

The problem with this paper is that it does not include a particular type of person. Social media can impact anyone at any time, transcending age, gender, class status, and geographical location. This global reach means that individuals from all walks of life are susceptible to its influences. Whether they are actively engaging with platforms or merely observing the lives of others. Its impossible to create an accurate portrayal of how social media impacts the NHS when there are so many topics relating to so many problems and causes. There are numerous topics relating to various problems and causes that intertwine with the effects of social media on mental health, making it a complex issue to analyse comprehensively. The diverse experiences shaped by cultural backgrounds, personal circumstances, and individual vulnerabilities must also be taken into account. while some people might find empowerment and community through online interactions, others may experience heightened anxiety or depression due to cyberbullying or unrealistic comparisons. Considerations for future research in this area, it is essential to take a more inclusive approach that recognises the diversity of individuals affected by social media.

Changes could be that government bodies, mental health organisations, and social media companies get together to create comprehensive guidelines that prioritise users' welfare while creating a safe digital environment. Moreover, public awareness campaigns are essential in educating users about the potential risks associated with social media usage. By promoting digital literacy and encouraging critical thinking regarding online content, individuals can be better equipped to navigate social media. Addressing these issues requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders involved—regulators, platform providers, mental health advocates, and users themselves—to create a healthier relationship with social media that safeguards both individual well-being and public health.

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