

Results

Background

- With social media becoming increasingly prevalent in daily life, college students are more at risk of being exposed to appearance-related media that can lead to body image concerns, eating disorders, the internalization “ideal” body types for men and women.^[1]
- According to the National Eating Disorders Association, between 10 to 20% of female and 4 to 10% of male college students suffer from an eating disorder, with rates continuing to increase.^[2]
- College students are constantly surrounded by social pressures to look good and fit beauty ideals, putting them at an increased risk of developing an eating disorder.

Objectives

- The objective was to determine the association between time spent on social media and the perception of eating disorders among college students at UC San Diego.

Methods

- We collected data over a 3 week period utilizing a cross-sectional study conducted through a Google Forms survey which was distributed to current UCSD students (n=85) in February 2024.
- Participant recruitment occurred via email announcements from the Department of Public Health, QR codes posted in highly areas around the UCSD campus, and linked posts in UCSD-affiliated Discord groups.
- Fisher's Exact Chi-squared test was conducted via SPSS.

Table 1: Demographics (N = 85)		N (%)
Age Groups	18-19	21 (25%)
	20-21	49 (58%)
	22-23	9 (11%)
	24+	6 (7%)
Gender Identity	Female	65 (77%)
	Male	18 (21%)
	Non-Binary	2 (2%)
College Year	First Year	17 (20%)
	Second Year	7 (8%)
	Third Year	8 (9%)
	Fourth Year	45 (53%)
	Fifth+ Year	1 (1%)
	Transfer Student	6 (7%)
	Graduate	1 (1%)

Figure 1. UCSD students' perceived agreement on social media promotions of beauty standard idealizations affecting eating behaviors of college students

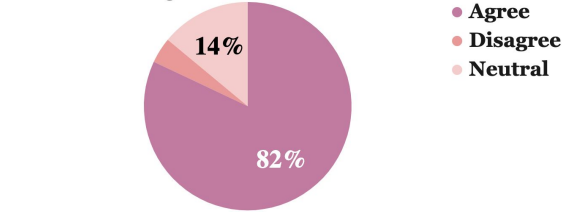


Figure 2. UCSD students' perceived average time spent on social media per day

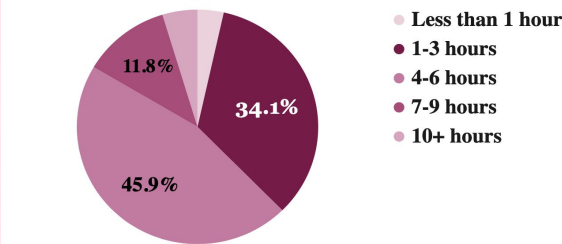
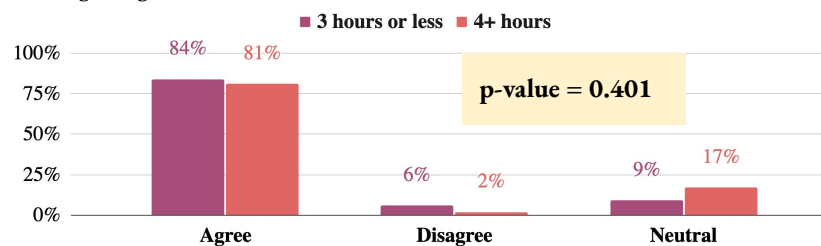


Figure 3: Perceived prevalence of social media use and promotions of beauty standard ideals affecting eating behaviors



Conclusion

- While there was no association between the duration of social media exposure and the perceptions of EDs among college students, the majority of participants felt that social media beauty standard idealizations may affect eating behaviors of college students.

Policy Implications

- To mitigate the risk of developing eating disorders, a campus-wide policy designed to educate UCSD students about media literacy regarding recognizing realistic beauty standards may be helpful.

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References

