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The influence of the media on the body perception and the risk of developing eating disorders in youth

Вплив медіа на формування сприйняття тіла та ризику розвитку розладів харчової поведінки у молоді

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Abstract


The standards of appearance created by media resources incite the excessive desire of young people to conform to patterns incompatible with reality. Determining the influence of media on body perception will contribute to reducing the risk of eating disorders in young people. The aim is to identify the impact of media on young people's perception of their bodies and their risk of developing eating disorders. The following empirical methods were employed: SATAQ-3, BAQ, EDI, ASI-R. Statistical methods: ANOVA, descriptive statistics, regression analysis. Media influence young people's attitudes to their body and pose a risk of developing eating disorders. Information impairs the attitude towards one's own appearance ($p \leq 0.01$) and provokes the risk of eating disorders ($p \leq 0.01$). Media pressure in 72% determines the risk of developing eating disorders ($R=0.642$), has the greatest influence on drive for


Анотація

Створення медіа ресурсами еталонів зовнішності провокують надмірне прагнення молоді відповідати несумісним із реальністю шаблоном. Визначення впливу медійних засобів на сприйняття тіла сприятиме зниженню ризику виникнення харчових розладів у молоді. Мета полягає у виявленні впливу засобів медіа на сприйняття молоддю свого тіла та ризику розвитку у них харчових розладів. Використано емпіричні методи: «SATAQ-3», BAQ, EDI, ASI-R. Статистичний метод: Anova, descriptive statistics, regression analysis. Засоби медіа впливають на ставлення до тіла молодих осіб та ризик виникнення у них харчових розладів. Інформування знижує ставлення до власної зовнішності ($p \leq 0,01$) та провокує ризик харчових розладів ($p \leq 0,01$). Тиск медіа у 72% обумовлює ризик розвитку розладів харчової поведінки ($R=0,642$), найбільше впливає на прагнення до


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thinness ($\beta=0.620\pm 0.319$) and body dissatisfaction ($\beta=0.557\pm 0.235$). The results of the study indicate the need to develop educational and preventive measures to eliminate the negative impact of mass media on body perception by young people and reduce the risk of eating disorders.

Keywords: Media, body perception, eating disorders, young people, prevention.

Introduction

Rapid informational progress in society makes media tools widely distributed among the population. The term "media" refers to the communication channels through which certain information is transferred: news, music, movies, advertising, etc. (Carpentier, 2013). The term "media" refers to everything that makes it possible to receive certain information: print and online newspapers, magazines, television, radio, billboards, telephone, Internet, social networks, and messengers (Khalaf et al., 2023). Media tools are created to inform people about events and phenomena, but this information is not always positive. In many cases, the media has a destructive effect on the personality and human body (Nghaimesh, 2023).

In recent decades, the media space has widely covered fashion trends in body shape, facial appearance, makeup, and even plastic surgery (Ohannessian et al., 2014). Very often, mass media present thin women and excessively muscular men (actors, models, artists). But people with excess weight are almost not represented at all. This position promotes the formation of an attitude that thinness is the standard of beauty, and excess weight is shameful and unacceptable. This shapes an attitude to follow such trends and accept everything that is shown in the media space (Frieiro Padín et al., 2021). The creation of artificial standards of beauty that do not correspond to reality leads to a distorted perception by people, especially youth, of their bodies (Sanzari et al., 2023). Young people begin to develop eating disorders in the constant search for the "ideal body" (Uchôa et al., 2019). Such disorders are characterized by increased psychopathology, serious physical health problems, impaired psychosocial functioning, and reduced quality of life (Williams et al., 2018).

According to the American Psychiatric Association, eating disorders consistently affect several million people, most often women aged

худоби ($\beta=0,620\pm 0,319$) та незадоволення тілом ($\beta=0,557\pm 0,235$). Результати дослідження свідчать про необхідність розробки просвітницьких та профілактичних заходів для усунення негативного впливу ЗМІ на сприйняття тіла молодими людьми та зниження ризику розладів харчової поведінки.

Ключові слова: медіа простір, інтернет, харчові розлади, усвідомлена тілесність, самосприйняття, перфекціонізм.

between 12 and 35. These can be very serious conditions affecting physical, psychological, and social functions (American Psychiatric Association, (s.f)). The National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA, (s.f)) states that eating disorders are often misunderstood by people, so in most cases they do not receive timely help.

Therefore, it is important to identify the role played by the media in young people's perception of themselves and their bodies, to understand the steps that can be taken to reduce their harmful influence. This will allow detection of eating disorders before they lead to pathological conditions.

The aim of the research is to study the extent of influence of media on the body perception of young people and their risk of developing eating disorders. The following hypothesis was advanced on the basis of the determined aim: media influence the attitude towards the body and the emergence of eating disorders in young people, in particular, social networks exert the greatest influence. The aim and hypothesis involved the fulfilment of the following research objectives:

- 1) identify the peculiarities of the attitude towards one's body among young people;
- 2) establish the presence of eating disorders among young people;
- 3) determine the extent of conscious bodily appearance of young people;
- 4) prove the impact of media on body perception and development of eating behaviour among young people.

In the section "Literature Review" the essence of the concept of "media" is presented, its structure and features of the influence of the individual's attitude towards his body are defined. Categorization of eating disorders arising under the influence of the media has been carried out. In the "Methods" section, the research procedure

is presented, the sample population is described, the methods of diagnosis and data analysis are substantiated, and the ethical criteria of the research are given. The "Results" section contains the main results of the study of the evaluation of one's own appearance and body awareness in young people, the presence of eating disorders. In the "Discussion" section, a description of the obtained indicators of young people's attitude towards their own body is presented, an analysis of the impact of the media on the attitude towards the body and the risk of eating disorders among young people is carried out. The results were compared with other studies. The "Conclusions" section includes the main provisions of the conducted research and describes limitations and prospects for further research.

Literature review

In the modern world, life is impossible without mass media. They serve as a virtual mediator between the society and a person as an end user. However, excessive information flow and low filtering of appropriateness of information can have a destructive effect on personality development. This is especially relevant at a young age, when people are actively forming their worldview and personal-oriented position. Youth is an active driving force of society, which ensures quality transformation of society. Therefore, the ideals that young people learn are essentially the ideals of sustainable development (Ohannessian et al., 2014). At the same time, young people actively use the media for their professional or personal needs, form their normative beliefs based on the received information.

Nowadays, one of the main topics in the media is the human body, beauty, standards of body shapes, stereotypes of behaviour. Accordingly, young people actively seek to follow the presented standards. This leads to the devaluing of one's self and the depersonalization of one's body appearance (Ramos et al., 2019). The influence on the perception of one's body appearance can have two vectors. The first one is aimed at simple communication of certain facts of human body appearance — the process of informing. The second vector is the purposeful influence and imposition of specific standards on the human body — a pressure (McCabe et al., 2007).

The rapid spread of social media use increases the frequency, duration, and variety of resources that young people use in their daily lives.

Identifying potentially harmful aspects of media use can contribute to the prevention of negative consequences of media abuse and its destructive impact on personality (Sanzari et al., 2023). The study suggests that current television and Internet trends are sources of unrealistic and inappropriate ideal images that are difficult to follow (Voelker et al., 2015).

The main postulates of the media regarding body appearance are the ideal body shape. Created artificial stereotype of a beautiful thin body encourages young people to achieve the same standard (Elran-Barak et al., 2020). Therefore, many young people resort to exhausting diets, food restrictions, or overeating, exhaustion from excessive physical load. At the same time, this behaviour is characteristic of both men and women (Rohde et al., 2023).

This influence results in numerous eating disorders. Eating disorders are a mental condition in which excessive control over eating is used to cope with negative feelings or to achieve a desired appearance (Kumar, 2023). Eating disorders are atypical eating habits that include skipping meals, restrictive diets or compulsive overeating, anorexia nervosa, or bulimia nervosa (Taylor et al., 2018). However, each type of emerging eating disorder still remains poorly understood (Whitelaw et al., 2018). Most of the emerging disorders are related to each other, mixed, or result from additional influences (Omeljaniuk et al., 2021).

At first glance, striving for an ideal is a positive stimulus for self-development. But when the changes are excessive and inconsistent with personal development, and the ideal is unattainable, changes occur at the mental level (Perrin et al., 2023). Such people find themselves on the edge of an internal contradiction: between who they are and the impossibility of becoming what they want (López-Gil et al., 2023). This contradiction provokes a nervous state in which a person seeks to change his body by physical means. Eating disorders are quite serious and in some cases fatal diseases (Zam et al., 2018).

According to the London Centre for Eating Disorders and Body (2022), almost 10,000 young people began treatment for eating disorders between April and December 2021, which is significantly more than in previous years.

A prerequisite for the emergence of eating disorders may be a body attitude (Schaefer et al., 2019). Body attitude is a subjective attitude towards one's body and satisfaction with it (Bulik

et al., 2019). This concept is essentially an internalization of external standards of beauty and appearance (Nagata et al., 2020). In other words, the body attitude is influenced by external information about body standards. On this basis, the individual compares his body with the standard of beauty prevailing in society. If the body does not meet the standard and the individual has certain psychological problems at the same time, this results in eating disorders aimed at achieving the ideal (Harrison et al., 2022). With age, the attitude towards the body can change, as the ability to self-understand decreases against the background of a negative attitude towards one's own body (Bellard et al., 2022). Accordingly, the more the standard of body and beauty is promoted in the media, the more people are able to perceive it as their own ideal. The integrity of the self-image is violated, the internal state and external needs are separated in achieving such an ideal. Eating disorders arise against this background.

Problems with the body attitude and eating disorders manifest themselves most in the period of youth. According to researchers, youth may feel inferior by comparing themselves to an ideal, leading to body image issues and lower self-confidence (Frank et al., 2018). Such problems lead to potentially dangerous eating disorders, including the most widespread — anorexia and bulimia (Morris & Anderson, 2021).

All of the foregoing requires empirical confirmation, as negative body attitudes and eating disorders are dangerous to health and can lead to death.

Methods

Research design

The study lasted 4 months between May 2023 and September 2023. During this time, the necessary amount of information was collected to achieve the aim of the research and confirm the hypothesis. The study involved 4 stages. The first stage provided for the methodological development of the research programme, selection of diagnostic methods, development of diagnostic forms. The second stage involved testing respondents according to the selected methods. The third stage included processing the research results, presenting them graphically and statistically. The fourth stage provided for a qualitative data analysis, a description of the obtained results, and their practical significance.

Sampling

The study involved 210 people aged 25 to 44 (according to the WHO classification): 74 male and 136 female. The research was conducted at Odesa National Maritime University and Odesa I. I. Mechnikov National University. The inclusion criterion was the age limits established by the study. All subjects are employees of the specified universities. Respondents with existing health problems that could affect the reliability of the results were excluded.

Methods

The research employed methods that correspond to the set aim and advanced hypothesis.

The Appearance Schemas Inventory Revised, ASI-R method. This questionnaire has two scales: a self-evaluative salience and a motivational salience scale. The self-evaluative salience scale measures the influence of self-evaluative salience on the evaluation of others. The motivational salience scale measures motivation to change (improve) one's appearance. This technique determines young people's attitude to their appearance.

Eating Disorder Inventory, EDI. The questionnaire identifies eating disorders, primarily anorexia nervosa, and bulimia nervosa. The first version of the questionnaire was developed in 1983 by D.M. Garner, M.P. Olmstead, J.P. Polivy. The technique consists of 7 subscales: drive for thinness, bulimia, body dissatisfaction, ineffectiveness, perfectionism, interpersonal insecurity, interoceptive deficits.

Body Awareness Questionnaire, BAQ. Test authors Shields, Mallory and Simon, translated by Maria Heinz. The test consists of 18 questions, the answers to which are distributed on a 7-point scale, assessing the degree of relevance of a particular statement to oneself. The overall score of the test indicates the level of body awareness.

The Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire (SATAQ-3) was used to identify the influence of the media on attitudes towards one's own body in young people. In the first version of the SATAQ, the main provision was the recognition of the existence of two aspects of the perception of social standards regarding body appearance: "awareness" and "internalization". In the updated version of the SATAQ-3, the authors supplemented the

questionnaire with additional scales of the social influence of mass media on beliefs, evaluations and attitudes about human corporeality: "information" and "pressure". The last two scales were used in this study : information and pressure to show how the media influence the body attitudes of young people.

Statistical Methods

Descriptive statistics, one-way ANOVA, Pearson correlation coefficient, and linear regression analysis were used in the study.

Table 1.
Indicators of assessment of one's own appearance and body awareness of young people

| Scale | Mean | SD | Dispersion (σ) |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------------------------|
| self-evaluative salience | 40.67 | 6.84 | 46.78 |
| motivational salience | 25.55 | 6.23 | 38.85 |
| Appearance Schemas Inventory | 63.58 | 9.84 | 96.91 |
| Body Awareness | 72.08 | 23.57 | 555.75 |

Source: (own data)

The obtained data indicate that young people have a high self-evaluative appearance and an average motivation to change their appearance. The integral indicator of the evaluation of one's own appearance is above average, which indicates a positive assessment by young people of their body appearance. For them, satisfaction with the features of their own appearance, as well

Ethical Criteria of Research

Before conducting the research, all respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and its confidentiality. The consent was obtained for diagnostics and non-disclosure of data.

Results

As a result of our research, the degree of assessment of one's own appearance and body awareness among young people has been established (Table 1).

as its evaluation by the surrounding people, is inherent to them, which leads to the desire to improve the parameters of their visual image in various ways, taking into account certain social ideas and cultural standards. The study of eating disorders showed that certain signs of disorders were found in the subjects (Table 2).

Table 2.
Indicators of eating disorders in young people

| Scale | Mean | SD | Dispersion (σ) |
|--------------------------|-------|------|-------------------------|
| Drive for thinness | 14.82 | 4.49 | 13.18 |
| Bulimia | 4.66 | 1.55 | 5.48 |
| Body dissatisfaction | 17.60 | 5.32 | 15.39 |
| Ineffectiveness | 13.14 | 4.31 | 14.34 |
| Perfectionism | 9.03 | 3.63 | 9.94 |
| Interpersonal insecurity | 7.25 | 2.64 | 8.99 |
| Interoceptive deficits | 12.26 | 6.57 | 13.59 |

Source: (own data)

According to the table, young people have a high drive for thinness, low bulimia, high body dissatisfaction, ineffectiveness, medium perfectionism, medium partial interpersonal insecurity, and high interoceptive deficits. Such indicators reflect problems in the eating behaviour of young people, which are mainly characterized by dissatisfaction with their appearance and their body and the desire to have

a thin body. Failure to achieve the desired standard can lead to nervous disorders in the future, which can manifest as anorexia or bulimia.

Determining the influence of the media on the young people's attitudes showed that the mass media exert pressure on young people (Table 3).

Table 3.
Indicators of mass media influence on youth

| Scales | Mean | SD | Dispersion (σ) |
|-------------|-------|------|-------------------------|
| Information | 16.48 | 5.26 | 27.67 |
| Pressures | 29.52 | 7.02 | 49.26 |

Source: (own data)

It was found that the media exerts medium information on young people (and high pressure on them). Today, the socialization of young people is impossible without the use of media tools, especially the Internet and social networks. However, excessive media pressure can form distorted stereotypes of appearance and body in young people that do not correspond to reality,

resulting in eating disorders. Ignoring them leads to consequences, which are characterized by severe neuropsychological disorders.

A correlational analysis was conducted to identify the relationship between media influence, body attitudes and eating disorders (Table 4).

Table 4.
Correlation between attitudes towards one's own appearance and the influence of the media

| Indicators of attitude towards one's own appearance | Information | | Pressures | |
|---|-------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| | r | p | r | p |
| self-evaluative salience | -0.708** | 0.000 | -0.654** | 0.000 |
| motivational salience | -.086 | -.052 | -0.216* | 0.042 |
| Appearance Schemas Inventory | -0.546** | 0.000 | -0.486** | 0.000 |
| Body Awareness | -0.696** | 0.000 | -0.587** | 0.000 |
| Eating disorders | Information | | Pressures | |
| | r | p | r | p |
| Drive for thinness | 0.326** | 0.000 | 0.482** | 0.000 |
| Bulimia | 0.282** | 0.000 | 0.223 | 0.740 |
| Body dissatisfaction | 0.271** | 0.000 | 0.206** | 0.000 |
| Ineffectiveness | 0.212 | 0.357 | 0.273** | 0.000 |
| Perfectionism | 0.353** | 0.000 | 0.490** | 0.000 |
| Interpersonal insecurity | 0.196 | 0.342 | 0.378** | 0.000 |
| Interoceptive deficits | 0.318** | 0.000 | 0.282 | 0.112 |

Source: (own data)

According to the obtained data, an inverse relationship was found between Information and self-evaluative salience scale ($r=-0.708$, $p\leq 0.01$), an integral indicator of attitude towards appearance ($r=-0.546$, $p\leq 0.01$), body awareness ($r=-0.696$, $p\leq 0.01$). These correlations indicate that the greater the informational influence exerted by the media, the lower young people rate their body appearance. Comparing one's own body with the standard offered by the media lowers self-esteem, self-confidence, and creates dissatisfaction with oneself. Such young people begin to look for ways to change themselves, to correct their bodies according to social standards, which causes eating disorders.

An inverse correlation was established between media pressure and the scale self-evaluative salience ($r=-0.654$, $p\leq 0.01$), motivational salience ($r=-0.216$, $p\leq 0.05$), an integral indicator of attitude to one's own appearance ($r=-0.486$, $p\leq 0.01$), body awareness ($r=-0.587$, $p\leq 0.01$). So,

when the pressure from the media increases, the positive attitude towards oneself and one's appearance decreases among young people. Such individuals begin to assimilate values imposed from the outside. At the same time, their negative self-attitude towards their body appearance and appearance provokes eating disorders, which are most often found among people who are dissatisfied with their physique.

A direct relationship between informing the media and the development of drive for thinness ($r=0.326$, $p\leq 0.01$), bulimia ($r=0.282$, $p\leq 0.01$), body dissatisfaction ($r=0.271$, $p\leq 0.01$), perfectionism ($r=0.353$, $p\leq 0.01$), interoceptive deficits ($r=0.318$, $p\leq 0.01$). Based on the obtained correlations, it can be asserted that the more aware young people are about their body and appearance, the more they are dissatisfied with their appearance and have signs of eating disorders.

Media pressure has a direct impact on the drive for thinness ($r=0.482$, $p\leq 0.01$), body dissatisfaction ($r=0.206$, $p\leq 0.01$), inefficiency ($r=0.273$, $p\leq 0.01$), perfectionism ($r=0.490$, $p\leq 0.01$), interpersonal insecurity ($r=0.378$, $p\leq 0.01$). The constant imposition of stereotypes and ideals of appearance by the media leads to an increase in eating disorders. Mostly, these are disorders of dissatisfaction with the body and the desire to lose weight in order to meet expected

standards. At the same time, perfectionism is expressed as a desire to achieve the desired ideal. This disturbs the internal balance of the individual and his/her interpersonal communication.

A linear regression analysis was conducted in order to determine the model of influence of media on body attitudes and the risk of eating disorders in young people (Table 5).

Table 5.
Regression analysis of media influence on body attitudes and risk of eating disorders in youth

| Scale | β | SD | t | p-value | R | R ² |
|------------------------------|---------|-------|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| Information | | | | | | |
| Self-evaluative salience | -0.349 | 0.044 | -70.959 | 0.000 | | |
| Motivational salience | 0.032 | 0.038 | 0.862 | 0.390 | -0.775 | 0.617 |
| Appearance Schemas Inventory | -0.091 | 0.013 | -70.155 | 0.000 | | |
| Body awareness | -0.349 | 0.044 | -70.959 | 0.000 | | |
| Drive for thinness | 0.403 | 0.235 | 10.719 | 0.087 | | |
| Bulimia | -0.067 | 0.238 | -0.280 | 0.780 | | |
| Body dissatisfaction | -0.189 | 0.275 | -0.687 | 0.493 | 0.684 | 0.548 |
| Ineffectiveness | 0.259 | 0.281 | 0.922 | 0.358 | | |
| Perfectionism | 0.408 | 0.253 | 10.612 | 0.108 | | |
| Interpersonal insecurity | -0.209 | 0.293 | -0.715 | 0.475 | | |
| Pressure | | | | | | |
| Self-evaluative salience | -0.489 | 0.067 | -70.316 | 0.000 | | |
| Motivational salience | 0.066 | 0.057 | 10.149 | 0.252 | -0.693 | 0.480 |
| Appearance Schemas Inventory | -0.087 | 0.019 | -40.481 | 0.000 | | |
| Drive for thinness | 0.114 | 0.008 | 20.113 | 0.000 | | |
| Bulimia | 0.620 | 0.319 | 10.944 | 0.053 | | |
| Body Dissatisfaction | -0.251 | 0.324 | -0.776 | 0.439 | | |
| Ineffectiveness | 0.557 | 0.373 | -10.493 | 0.137 | | |
| Perfectionism | 0.380 | 0.382 | 0.995 | 0.321 | 0.642 | 0.717 |
| Interpersonal insecurity | 0.297 | 0.344 | 0.865 | 0.388 | | |
| Interoceptive deficits | 0.084 | 0.398 | 0.211 | 0.833 | | |
| Drive for thinness | 0.367 | 0.319 | 10.152 | 0.251 | | |

Regression analysis showed that the media has an influence on body attitudes and eating disorders in young people. It was found that media has a 62% influence on attitudes towards the body and appearance ($R=-0.775$), in particular, it has the greatest impact on body awareness ($\beta=0.349\pm 0.04$). Such data indicate that information about ideals of appearance forms a stereotype among young people, which requires them to conform to such ideals. It was also found that information by 55% determines the risk of developing eating disorders ($R=0.684$), the most perfectionism ($\beta=0.408\pm 0.235$) and drive for thinness ($\beta=0.403\pm 0.253$).

In 48% of cases, media pressure leads to a decreased self-esteem towards one's appearance and perceived body appearance ($R=-0.693$), in particular, the greatest impact was found on self-esteem of appearance ($\beta=-0.489\pm 0.067$). Also, media pressure determines the risk of developing

eating disorders by 72% ($R=0.642$), has the greatest impact on drive for thinness ($\beta=0.620\pm 0.319$), and body dissatisfaction ($\beta=0.557\pm 0.235$).

Therefore, the results of the study confirmed the influence of media on body attitudes and the risk of developing eating disorders in young people.

Discussion

The study found that modern media have a negative impact on young people's attitude to their bodies and appearance and cause the risk of developing eating disorders. Inverse relationship between the effect of media and attitude to one's body appearance and direct relationship with eating disorders were found. This suggests that the information received from the mass media about the ideals of beauty and the body distorts the self-perception of young people and forms

unattainable standards of beauty. Striving to achieve a set ideal lowers the self-esteem of young people, their level of harassment, disrupts the perception of their body, and lowers satisfaction with themselves and their appearance. As a result, young people begin to look for ways to change their bodies and achieve the standards of beauty dictated by the media. In the search for an ideal, there is a risk of developing eating disorders. In particular, as it turned out, the most frequent are the drive for thinness, perfectionism, dissatisfaction with the body. And the stronger the influence of the media, the more young people strive to achieve body beauty standards imposed on them.

Similar results have been obtained in many other studies, which established that the perception of body image is shaped by unrealistic ideals presented in the mass media. At the same time, body dissatisfaction is a risk factor for eating disorders, low self-esteem, depression, and obesity (Sharma et al., 2019).

The results of a similar study were presented in more detail by McCabe et al. (2007). They also found that the media affects body attitudes, but more extensively showed that this influence is equally strong both for men, and women. At the same time, another study proved the opposite of such statements, where it was found that the overall incidence of eating disorders among women is significantly higher than among men (Williams et al., 2018). Therefore, identifying the gender aspect of attitudes towards body and eating disorders requires additional research.

Uchoa et al. proved that the influence of the media is a predictor of the development of eating disorders and dissatisfaction with one's body. Through media information flows, the media can encourage young people to adopt patterns of physical beauty, which in case of non-compliance with such standards leads to dissatisfaction with their own bodies (Uchôa et al., 2019). The recent study found that social media platform use has a negative impact on body image among adolescents and young adults (Nghaimesh, 2023). It is social networks, as the main channel for obtaining information, that form a stereotypical attitude to their body and appearance in young people.

Mazurkiewicz et al. (2021) did not find a relationship between body shape parameters and feelings of stigma, even when subjective body evaluation acted as a moderator. At the same time, body weight was a strong predictor of levels of perceived stigma. Obese women

experienced higher levels of stigma than other groups. So, the standards of female beauty imposed in the media with a thin body and a beautiful face encourage a feeling of inferiority of overweight women.

Frieiro Padín et al. (2021) proved that the media only increase awareness of social norms in a particular country and cultural environment. Therefore, the attitude to body appearance largely depends on the social norms of a specific ethnicity, and the media only promote these norms. Such conclusions require additional research.

So, the study showed that the media really influence the body attitude of young people and can provoke the development of eating disorders. However, with proper medical care, people with eating disorders can regain healthy eating habits, as well as their emotional and psychological health (Grigaliūnaitė et al., 2023). Control of the quantity and quality of consumed content, and not the time spent on media resource platforms should be one of the methods of prevention and overcoming the negative consequences of media influence (Sanzari et al., 2023). In addition, it is advisable to study the psychological problems of young people and the functioning of the brain, which will make it possible to improve the attitude to one's body appearance and prevent the risk of eating disorders (Frank et al., 2018).

Conclusions

The study found that media influence the body attitude and poses the risk of developing eating disorders. The obtained results are valuable for the prevention of eating disorders among young people. The modern rapid development of the Internet and especially social networks has contributed to the fact that young people excessively use information channels and have a very low threshold for its filtering. An unbiased attitude to all informational content leads to depersonalization and devaluation of the individual and can significantly disrupt the homeostasis of the body. Therefore, identifying the influence of the media on attitudes towards the body and the risk of developing eating disorders opens up ways to develop effective methods of preventing such disorders.

The media should be responsible for the information presented, so as not to present unrealistic ideals of body image and appearance. Preventive measures should be aimed primarily at promoting a healthy body image and eating behaviour.

The limitations of the study are the difficult psychological condition of individuals who have signs of eating disorders. They actively deny the existing problem, therefore, identifying the disorder and providing them with help requires the active involvement of such persons in cooperation. The issue of the extent at which young people themselves determine distorted media content regarding the body and beauty also remains unexplored. Another unexplored issue is whether young people who have problems with body image and nutrition are actively looking for unattainable ideals and standards in the media.

The prospects of the study include determining gender peculiarities in the perception of one's own body and manifestations of eating disorders. It is also important to establish which media channels most determine a distorted attitude towards one's own appearance.

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