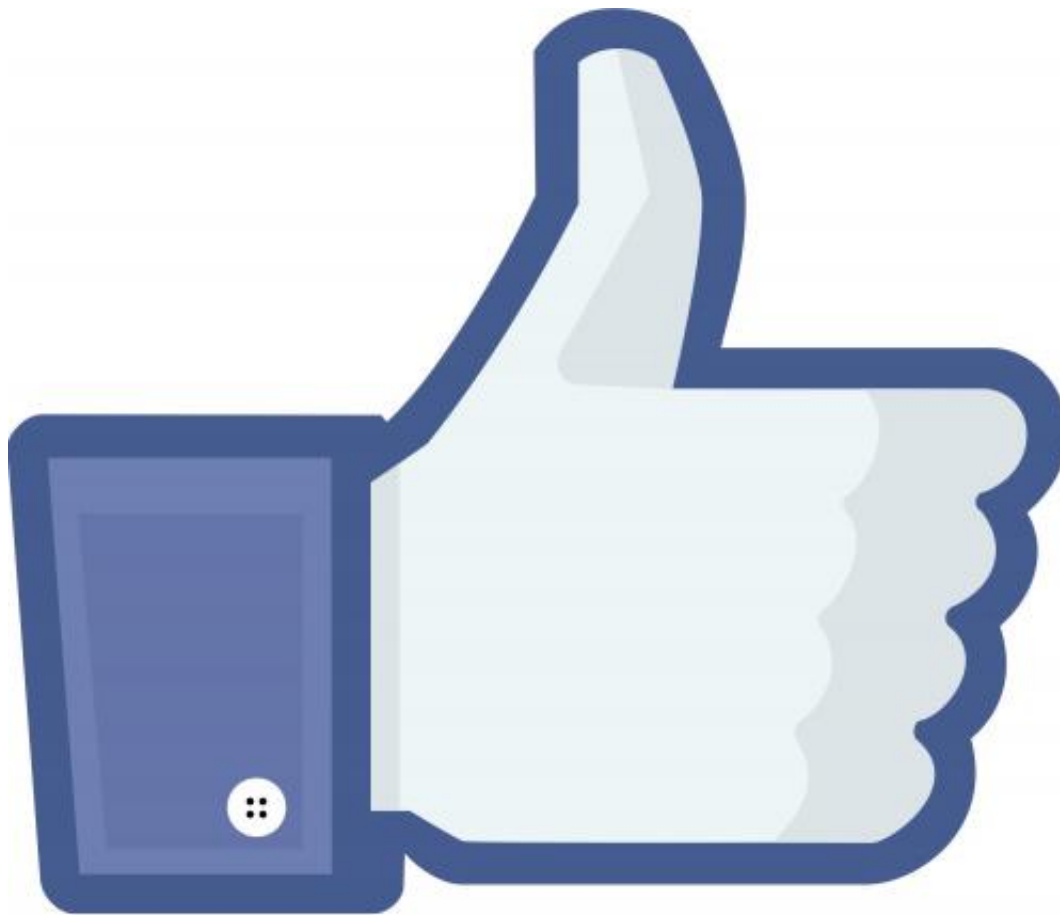


Increased time on Facebook could lead women to negative body images

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The mediated version of what women should look like has always been under scrutiny, particularly looking at actresses and fashion models. But

what about body image from social networks and friends? A recent study by researchers in the United Kingdom and United States, found that more time on Facebook could lead to more negative feelings and more comparisons to the bodies of friends.

Petya Eckler, University of Strathclyde; Yusuf Kalyango Jr., Ohio University; and Ellen Paasch, University of Iowa will present their findings at the 64th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association in Seattle, WA. The researchers surveyed 881 college women about their Facebook use, eating and exercise habits, and body image. They were able to predict how often women felt negatively about their own bodies after looking at someone else's photos or posts, and how often women compared their own bodies to those of their friends.

The findings also showed that more time spent on Facebook was associated with more [negative feelings](#) and more comparisons to the bodies of friends. They also found that for women who want to lose weight, more time on Facebook led to more attention being paid to physical appearance. This included attention to one's body and clothing.

Previous studies have examined college or adolescent girls and the effect of Facebook on users' body image over non-users'. However, this is the first study to link time spent on Facebook to [poor body image](#).

"Public health professionals who work in the area of eating disorders and their prevention now have clear evidence of how [social media](#) relates to college women's body image and eating disorders. While time spent on Facebook had no relation to eating disorders, it did predict worse body image among participants," said Eckler. "As experts in the field know, poor [body image](#) can gradually lead to developing an unhealthy relationship with food. The attention to physical attributes may be even more dangerous on social media than on [traditional media](#) because

participants in social media are people we know. These comparisons are much more relevant and hit closer to home. Yet they may be just as unrealistic as the images we see on traditional media."

More information: "Facebook and College Women's Bodies: Social Media's Influence on Body Image and Disordered Eating," by Petya Eckler, Yusuf Kalyango Jr. and Ellen Paasch is to be presented at the 64th Annual International Communication Association Conference, Seattle, WA, 22-26 May 2014.

Provided by International Communication Association

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