

New online program to improve body image

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Credit: Laura Gilmore, flickr

A new study is looking for young Australians aged 18-25 years who worry about their weight and body shape to take part in a six-week online program to improve body image.

Kathina Ali, PhD student at ANU, said the ProYouth OZ program focused on promoting [mental health](#), specifically related to eating behaviour and body satisfaction.

"Body dissatisfaction is one of the top ranked issues of concern for [young people](#) in Australia," said Ms Ali from the ANU Research School of Psychology and Centre for Mental Health Research.

In the program participants learn about problems people can have with body image, and become aware of unhealthy eating behaviours.

Some participants will also have access to a supportive weekly online chat session with a health professional and a peer who has gone through similar experiences.

"Participants will monitor their eating, weight or shape concerns over the six weeks and get tailored supportive feedback," Ms Ali said.

"We are hoping to get a better understanding of what helps young people with eating and [body image](#) issues and reduce barriers toward seeking help such as stigma and shame."

"It is common for people to feel dissatisfied with their body at some point but if it's something that consumes their thoughts on a daily basis or is affecting their ability to engage in life it is important to do something about it," she said.

"The media and social media is not to blame but it does often portray an unrealistic beauty ideal that, in vulnerable people, can result in a perception that their body is not as it should be."

"With this program, anyone who has access to the internet could potentially take part and benefit from participating."

Provided by Australian National University

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