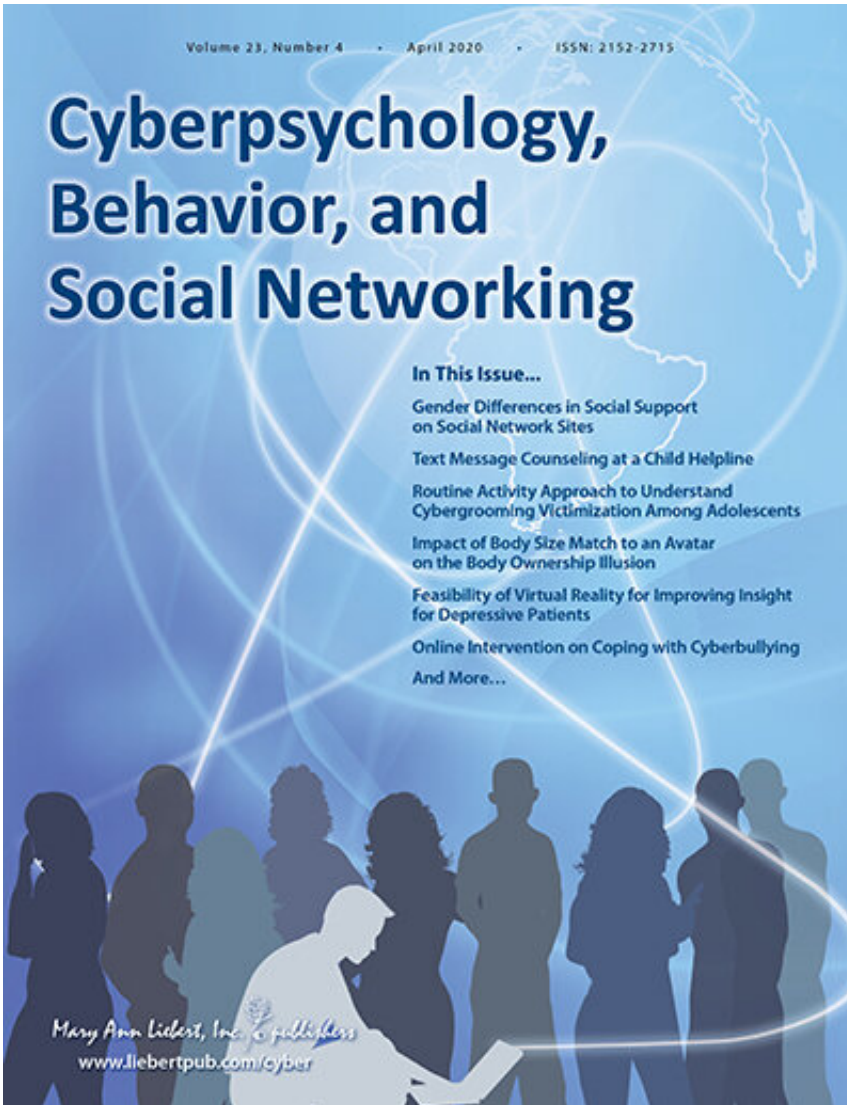


Instagram and the male body image

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Explores the psychological and social issues surrounding the Internet and interactive technologies. Credit: Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers

In a new study among males depicted on Instagram, the majority of posts showed men with low body fat, while only a small fraction depicted men with high body fat. Sixty-two percent of posts showed men with low body fat and 41% showed high muscularity, whereas only 6% showed men with high body fat and 17% showed low muscularity. Men with both low body fat and high muscularity (35%) represented the largest group with a specific body type, according to the study published in *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*.

"Male Body Image Portrayals on Instagram" was coauthored by Thomas Gültzow, Francine Schneider, and Ciska Hoving, Maastricht University, Netherlands, and Jeanine Guidry, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA. The researchers reported that exercise was the most frequently shown behavior. Furthermore, the number of likes and comments was significantly related to body composition, and the number of responses increased with decreasing levels of body fat and increasing levels of body muscularity.

"Based on Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, body image pictures on Instagram may, through positive modeling, help to counteract the obesity epidemic, with the portrayals leading men to lead more healthy lifestyles. On the negative side, the skewed images may lead to male body dissatisfaction, depression and eating disorders. We can use this knowledge to educate our patients about the false sense of reality often portrayed on social media," says Editor-in-Chief Brenda K. Wiederhold, Ph.D., MBA, BCB, BCN, Interactive Media Institute, San Diego, California and Virtual Reality Medical Institute, Brussels, Belgium.

More information: Thomas Gültzow et al, Male Body Image Portrayals on Instagram, *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* (2020). [DOI: 10.1089/cyber.2019.0368](https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2019.0368)

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

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