

A41 Associations of personal factors, psychological factors, and social media use with body image perception among undergraduate students during COVID-19 pandemic

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Negative body image is a worldwide issue that is highly prevalent among young adults. Despite body image among university students has been increasingly studied over the last century, no local study assessed body image during COVID-19 pandemic. Research in body image has recently shifted to 'modern' types of media, for instance, Internet and especially social networking sites, as there was a significant surge in media consumption as compared to the pre-pandemic period. Therefore, this cross-sectional study aimed to investigate the associations of personal factors, psychological factors and social media use with body image perception among undergraduate students during COVID-19 pandemic. This study included 378 Malaysian undergraduate students (21.4% males and 78.6% females) with a mean age of 21.85 ± 1.59 years. They completed an online self-administered questionnaire comprising information on socio-demographic characteristics, body image perception, self-weighting, depression, anxiety, stress, social media use (duration, selfie taking, selfie sharing, photo manipulation and social grooming) as well as self-reported weight and height. Results showed that majority of the respondents (79.7%) dissatisfied with their current body size, especially females (81.8%) as compared to males (71.6%). The average duration of using social media per day was about 5 hours, with the most popular social media platforms were WhatsApp (88.1%), Instagram (52.9%) and YouTube (42.1%). Multiple regression analysis showed that age ($\beta=0.095$, $p=0.039$), sex ($\beta=0.226$, $p<0.001$), BMI ($\beta=0.400$, $p<0.001$) and depression ($\beta=0.129$, $p=0.005$) were significantly associated with body dissatisfaction among undergraduate students. In conclusion, high body dissatisfaction was observed among undergraduate students in this study. Those who were older, females, with higher BMI and depressed were found to have higher body dissatisfaction but not social media use. Preventive strategies focusing on promoting positive body image could include strategies on maintaining a healthy body weight and lifestyle.