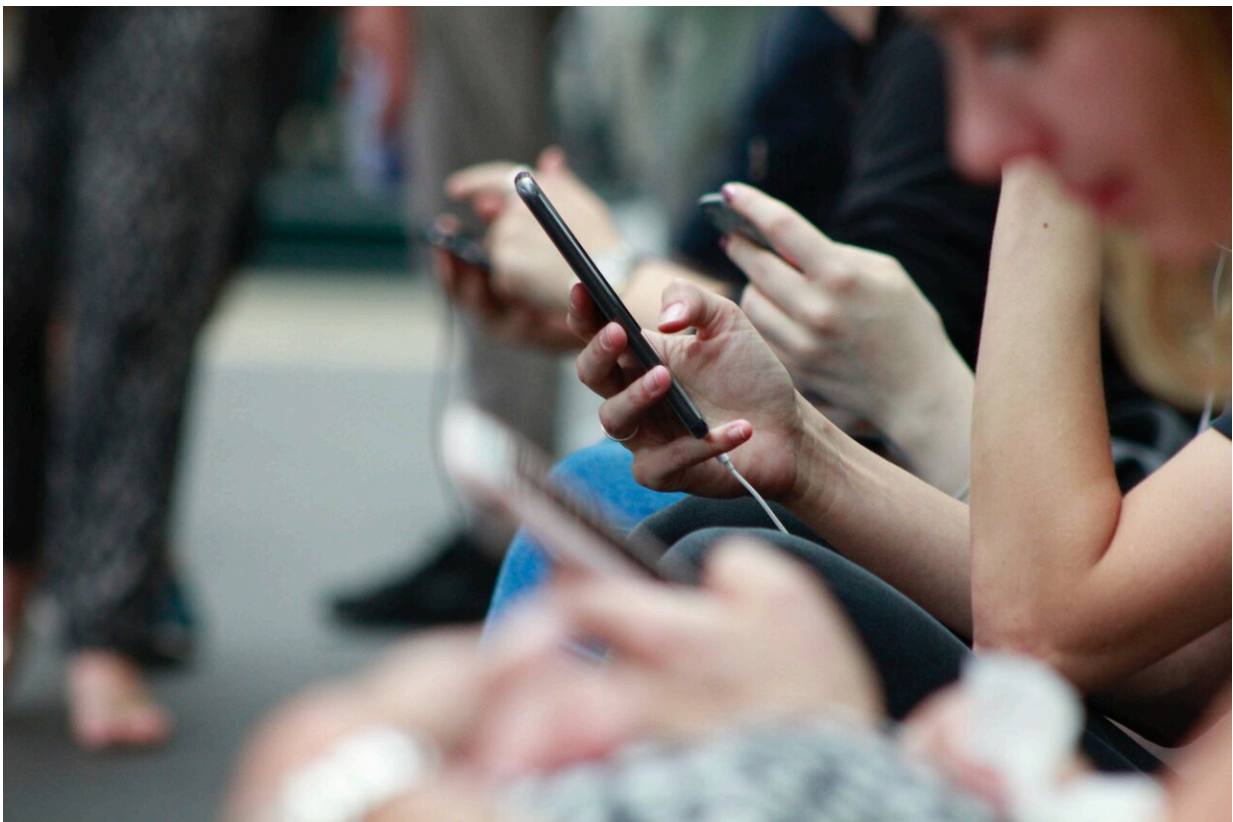


# Social media use linked to symptoms of muscle dysmorphia among Canadian boys and young men

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Prior research has shown strong links between greater time spent on screens and eating disorders and body dissatisfaction. A new study,

published in the journal *Eating and Weight Disorders—Studies on Anorexia, Bulimia, and Obesity*, now shows that greater screen time is also associated with muscle dysmorphia symptoms, such as a drive for muscularity and body dissatisfaction related to muscle mass and tone.

"It is really important to study the contemporary factors, like [screen use](#), that may be associated with symptoms of muscle dysmorphia," says lead author Kyle T. Ganson, Ph.D., MSW, assistant professor at the University of Toronto's Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work. "We know that [screen time](#) can have detrimental effects for young people, and now we can include muscle dysmorphia in that conversation."

Analyzing data from over 2,500 Canadian adolescents and [young adults](#) from the Canadian Study of Adolescent Health Behaviors, the researchers found that greater time on [social media](#) and texting among boys and men, and greater time watching TV, watching videos online, texting, and video chatting among girls and women were associated with symptoms of muscle dysmorphia.

"Our data supports the notion that various forms of screen use may be contributing to muscle dysmorphia risk factors, including body dissatisfaction and pressures to achieve sociocultural body ideals," Ganson says.

The researchers emphasized that screen use, including the use of social media or watching videos online, may be an avenue to gather information on muscularity-oriented behaviors, including weight training routines and dietary practices. Conversely, video chatting may increase body dissatisfaction via the self-reflective nature of this communication format.

"This research is really the start of an important line of inquiry where we begin to understand exactly what content online may have the most

influence on symptoms of muscle dysmorphia," Ganson says. "Still, parents, [health care providers](#), and public health professionals should be thinking about how we can limit and promote safe use of screens for [young people](#) in hopes of reducing symptoms of mental health, including those of muscle dysmorphia."

**More information:** Contemporary Screen Use and Symptoms of Muscle Dysmorphia among a National Sample of Canadian Adolescents and Young Adults, *Eating and Weight Disorders—Studies on Anorexia Bulimia and Obesity* (2023). [DOI: 10.1007/s40519-023-01550-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40519-023-01550-7)

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