

## Repercussions of Social Networks on Their Users' Body Image: Integrative Review\*

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**ABSTRACT** – This integrative review of literature followed the PICO strategy to investigate the repercussions of the use of social networks on the body image of their users. PubMed, LILACS, PsycINFO and SciELO databases were included as well as articles published between January 2006 and February 2019. Thirty-three articles were analyzed, which compose the corpus of this review. The studies revealed that social networks have a predominantly negative repercussion on the body self-image of their users, increasing levels of body dissatisfaction, also having a negative impact on mood and self-esteem. Added to this, social networks influenced the body type that users would like to have, translated by the lean body profile, considered a model of beauty.

**KEYWORDS:** social network, self-concept, body image

## Repercussões das Redes Sociais na Imagem Corporal de Seus Usuários: Revisão Integrativa\*

**RESUMO** – Esta revisão integrativa da literatura seguiu a estratégia PICO para investigar as repercussões do uso das redes sociais na imagem corporal de seus usuários. Foram consultadas as bases PubMed, LILACS, PsycINFO e SciELO e incluídos artigos publicados entre janeiro de 2006 e fevereiro de 2019. Foram analisados 32 artigos na íntegra, que compuseram o *corpus* dessa revisão. Os estudos revelaram que as redes sociais repercutem predominantemente de forma negativa na autoimagem corporal de seus usuários, aumentando os níveis de insatisfação corporal e gerando impacto negativo no estado de humor e na autoestima. Somado a isso, as redes sociais influenciaram no tipo corporal que os usuários gostariam de ter traduzido pelo perfil corporal magro, considerado como modelo de beleza.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** rede social, autoimagem, imagem corporal

Our bodily existence is inserted in a cultural and relational context, and through the body we can express the effects of the representations with which we had contact and communicate with each other. In this sense, the body overcomes the purely biological character, also manifesting itself as a social, cultural, psychological, and religious expression (Ulian et al., 2016; Barbosa et al., 2011). As a result of a social construction, the body and the attributes in which it must fit to be considered “beautiful” are, to a large extent, shaped by the bodily ideals and the beauty standards proposed by each society, which are dynamic and varied in

different social, cultural and historical contexts (Christakis & Fowler, 2007).

Body image (BI) can be defined as the image of the body built in our mind, as well as the perceptions, feelings and thoughts related to the body itself (Slade, 1994). The social aspects are the most relevant in this construction, due to the influences of the values of body aesthetics in contemporary times (Marcuzzo et al., 2012). BI is constituted by the perceptual dimension, related to the judgment of body size and shape, and attitudinal dimension, which includes behavioral, affective, and cognitive components (Thompson,

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1996). Body dissatisfaction is considered an attitudinal disorder of BI, and concerns the negative assessment that one has about one's own body, due to the perception of a discrepancy between the assessment of the current body and the body considered ideal (Grogan, 2008), which currently closes in on the possibilities of a thin body, shaped with soft curves and sculpturally worked in gyms (Campo et al., 2016).

Social factors are closely related to body dissatisfaction, with emphasis on the influence of the media, which is considered one of the main risk factors for body dissatisfaction (Conti et al., 2010; Thompson et al., 1999). The mass communication media, such as magazines, television and the Internet, is impregnated with images of idealized, thin, delicate and shapely bodies, which generates comparisons of appearance and interferes with the perception we build of our own body and, consequently, contribute to the dissatisfaction we have with him. These images can also promote unattainable ideals of beauty, since they are far removed from the bodies of most of the population (Marcuzzo et al., 2012; Campos et al., 2016; Derenne & Beresin, 2006). In addition, there is manipulation by computerized image editing programs, which creates false images of perfect bodies (Krawitz, 2014).

With the advent of the Internet, the social networks that constitute new types of media became popular and started to be widely consumed by the population. These platforms allow their users to share, through public or private profiles, what is of their greatest interest, interact with other users and show their point of view on certain subjects (Madeira & Galucci, 2009). In social networks, users are, at the same time, a source and recipient of information, and actively

decide how they participate in these platforms, differently from what happens with traditional mass media, whose consumption occurs more passively. In these spaces, it is possible to participate in various activities, such as sharing photos, videos, information about different subjects and about their own lives, in addition to making comments about the activities of others. Examples of popular social networks include Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016).

As observed for traditional media, social networks seem to play an important role in the construction and dissemination of idealized body patterns (Holland & Tiggemann, 2016), with potential negative repercussions on self-image and body satisfaction. In this sense, understanding this phenomenon is of fundamental importance, since body dissatisfaction can trigger physical and psychological diseases, such as the development of eating disorders, depression, low self-esteem, social comparison, anxiety, increase in cosmetic plastic surgery and decrease in quality of life (Souza & Alvarenga, 2016).

As it is a recent phenomenon, there is a shortage of systematized scientific knowledge about the use of social networks and their repercussions on body image, especially with regard to dissatisfaction with body image. It is understood that the systematization of this knowledge is important for better understanding, considering that the use of social networks, today, is an important part of people's lives. Therefore, this study aimed to carry out an integrative review of the growing body of research that investigated the repercussions of the use of social networks on the body image of their users.

## METHOD

It is an integrative review of the scientific literature, which aims to synthesize the state of knowledge about a given subject, discussing it in a critical and integrated manner, in order to enable the survey of gaps that require further research. The initial purpose of this research method is to obtain deep understanding of a given phenomenon based on previous studies (Broome, 2000). Therefore, the integrative review includes the analysis of research that is relevant and that will serve as a basis for decision making and for the improvement of clinical practice (Benefield, 2003). The procedure performed in this review followed the steps proposed by Mendes et al. (2008), which are: (1) identification of the theme and guiding question; (2) establishment of inclusion/exclusion criteria; (3) categorization of studies; (4) evaluation of studies; (5) interpretation of results and (6) synthesis of knowledge.

For the present work, the research question was defined based on the PICO strategy, which provides for the definition of the participant (P), intervention (I), comparison (C) and outcome (O) (Harris et al., 2014). It

is intended to answer the guiding question: What are the repercussions of social networks (I) on the body image (O) of their users (P)?

### Article Selection Path

The selection of articles took place between March and April 2019, and was carried out by two independent judges. If there was disagreement among the reviewers as to the adequacy of the study, there was an evaluation by a third judge. Searches were carried out in the databases PubMed, LILACS (*Literatura Latino-americana e do Caribe em Ciências da Saúde* [Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences]), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) and PsycINFO. From those selected, articles in Portuguese, English and Spanish were considered. These databases were chosen because they reach vast literature, nationally and internationally, published on the topic of interest, and also because they include renowned journals in the health sciences.

For searches, indexed descriptors were used according to DeCs/MeSh standardization, in their Portuguese and English versions. The term social networking was crossed with the descriptors self-image, body image. Other descriptors not indexed, but directly related to the topic, were also used, namely: digital social network, social media, and body dissatisfaction, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Fitspiration. These keywords appeared in at least one of the following search fields: title, abstract, subject or keyword. The combination of descriptors for each search strategy used in each database is described in Table 1.

The inclusion criteria established were (a) articles published between January 2006 and February 2019; (b) studies that directly addressed the topic of interest; (c) empirical studies; (d) articles available for free to read in full and (e) published in Portuguese, English and Spanish. The following were excluded: (a) materials such as monographs,

editorials, books, book chapters, reviews, and abstracts in conference proceedings; (b) literature review articles and (c) studies on the elaboration and validation of scientific instruments. Studies that were repeated in more than one database were computed only once.

In order to verify whether the articles met the inclusion and exclusion criteria, an evaluation was carried out by two independent reviewers, obeying the following order: (1) titles of all identified studies; (2) abstracts of the studies selected in the previous phase and (3) complete reading of the selected texts. After excluding articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria, a record of all articles that made up the *corpus* of analysis of this study was performed, with the following information: title, authors, year and place of publication, base where the study was found, outlining, sample, instruments used, objectives, main results and main conclusions.

Table 1

Number of References Found in The Databases According to The Search Strategy Used

Search Strategy	Databases	Number of articles found
Digital social networking AND body dissatisfaction	Scielo*, LILACS*	2
Digital social networking AND self-concept	PubMed, SciELO*	5
Digital social networking AND body image	PubMed, SciELO*, LILACS*	9
Digital social networking AND self-concept AND body image	PubMed, PsycINFO, SciELO*, LILACS	0
Facebook AND body image	PubMed, PsycINFO, SciELO*, LILACS	69
Twitter AND body image	PubMed, PsycINFO, LILACS*	24
Fitspiration	PudMed, PsycINFO,	39
Instagram	PubMed, PsycINFO, SciELO*, LILACS*	455
Social media AND body dissatisfaction	PubMed, PsycINFO, Scielo*, LILACS*	184
Social media AND self-concept	PubMed, PsycINFO, SciELO*, LILACS*	664
Social media AND body image	PubMed, PsycINFO, SciELO*, LILACS*	515
Social media AND self-concept AND body image	PubMed, PsycINFO, SciELO*	274
Social networking AND body dissatisfaction	PubMed, PsycINFO, SciELO*, LILACS*	28
Social networking AND self-concept	PubMed, PsycINFO, SciELO*	237
Social networking AND body image	PubMed, PsycINFO, SciELO*, LILACS*	86
Social networking AND self-concept AND body image	PubMed, SciELO, LILACS*	21
Total		2.612

\*Database where the combinations of uniterms occurred in English and Portuguese

## RESULTS

The searches in the databases resulted in a total of 2,612 articles. The database with the largest number of articles was PubMed (1,976), followed by PsycINFO (413), SciELO (170) and LILACS (53). In the first stage of the analysis, 1,208 articles were excluded because they were duplicates. Subsequently, 1,349 articles were excluded, the main reason for exclusion being the fact that they did not directly address the topic of interest. There were 55 articles left to read in full and, after this reading, 23 articles were excluded, as they did not address the

theme of social networks or body image, totalling 32 articles, which comprised the corpus of this review. Figure 1 presents the flowchart of selection strategy according to PRISMA rules.

From the selected articles, which assessed the relationship between the use of social networks and body image, the authorship, the year of publication, the sample, the outlining of the study, the main objective of the study, the main instruments used for the evaluation of body image and the main results found were highlighted.(Table 2).

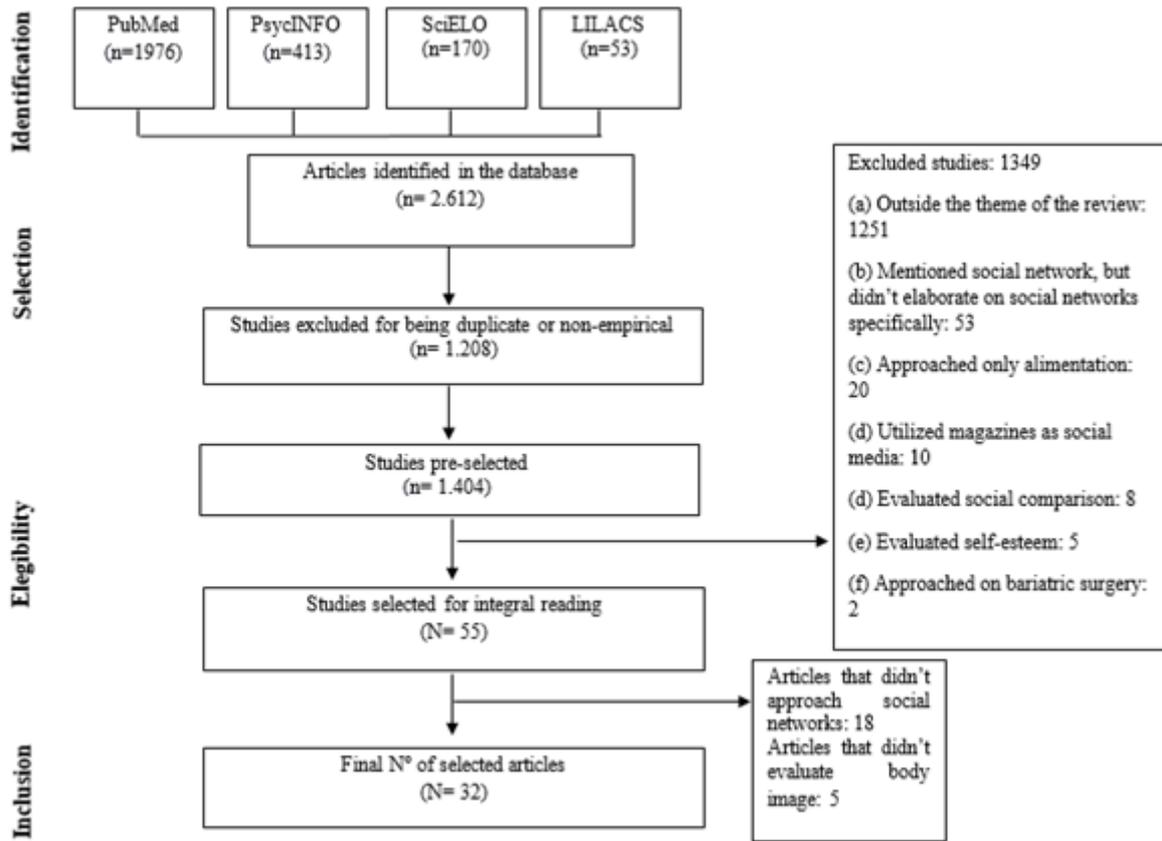


Figure 1. Steps of Selection of the Articles Included in the Review

Table 2  
International and National Studies Carried Out Involving Body Image and Social Network (N= 32)

Author (year)	Sample	Objective / Outlining	Instruments for assessing BI	Main results
Hogue and Mills (2019) Canada	143 female students	Examining the effects of following web-celebrities profiles from social networks (considered beautiful and attractive) on body self-image. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	Visual Analog Scale (VAS).	Participants who followed these profiles on social networks showed higher levels of negative body self-image vs. group control.
Slater et al. (2019) England	102 adult women	Investigating the influence of exposure to images of thin bodies of celebrities on Instagram vs. exposure to thin bodies of celebrities with humorous content in body satisfaction and humor. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	Body satisfaction by visual analog scale (VAS).	Women exposed to images of thin bodies with humorous content had higher levels of body satisfaction and mood (happiness) vs. those that were exposed only to images of thin bodies.
Griffiths et al. (2018) Australia	2733 men	Determining whether the frequency of use of different social media platforms is associated with body dissatisfaction, symptoms of eating disorders and thoughts about steroid use. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	The Male Body Attitudes Scale–Revised (MBAS-R)	The greater frequency of use of social media, especially Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, was associated with greater concern with body image and symptoms of eating disorders. There was no association with the use of steroids.
Mills et al. (2018) Canada	110 female graduation students	Testing whether the posting of <i>selfies</i> on social networks, with or without photo editing, has repercussions on the satisfaction with the body self-image and the mood of the students. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	Body satisfaction by visual analog scale (VAS).	Students who posted <i>selfies</i> had higher levels of dissatisfaction with body self-image and lower levels of mood, regardless of the photo edition, compared to the control group.

Table 2

Cont.

Author (year)	Sample	Objective / Outlining	Instruments for assessing BI	Main results
Powell et al. (2018) United States	250 female graduation students	Examining the contributions of levels of social comparison and nutritional status (BMI) in predicting concerns about body image with users of the Pinterest platform. Cross-sectional correlational outlining.	The Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ)	BMI values were negatively correlated with body satisfaction levels. The levels of social comparison mediated the relationship with body satisfaction.
Tiggemann et al. (2018) Australia	220 female graduation students	Investigating the effect of the number of likes that accompanied images centered on "ideal" female bodies vs. "normal" female bodies posted on <i>Instagram</i> on the body and facial satisfaction of college students. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	Body satisfaction by visual analog scale (VAS).	There was a significant effect of the type of image on body and facial satisfaction, with images of "ideal" bodies generating higher levels of dissatisfaction for both. The number of likes did not result in greater body dissatisfaction.
Tiggemann and Barbato (2018) Australia	128 female graduation students	Investigating the effect of viewing comments associated with photos of attractive bodies on <i>Instagram</i> vs. exposure to comments associated with photos of places and landscapes (control group) in body satisfaction. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	Body satisfaction by visual analog scale (VAS).	Body satisfaction levels were lower in the group exposed to comments associated with photos of attractive bodies vs. group control.
de Vries et al. (2016) Netherlands	440 female adolescents	Examining the associations between the use of social media, body dissatisfaction and a positive relationship with parents. Cross-sectional correlational outlining.	The body dissatisfaction subscale of the Body Attitude Test (BAT)	There was a positive association between the use of social media and body dissatisfaction, and this association was weaker in adolescents who reported a more positive mother-adolescent relationship. The parent-adolescent relationship did not moderate the association between the use of social media and body dissatisfaction. The adolescents reported concerns about appearance and social comparison associated with the use of social media (Snapchat and Instagram), which was high in this sample. However, parents restricted this use, which seems to mitigate the negative association between exposure to these media and satisfaction with body self-image.
Burnette et al. (2017) United States	38 girls (12 to 14 years old)	Exploring how teenagers use social media and their perceptions of the impact of these media on social comparison and body satisfaction. Exploratory cross-sectional outlining.	Six focus groups	
Cohen et al. (2017) Australia	259 women	Identifying which activities performed on the social networks Facebook and Instagram are related to concerns with body image. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	<i>The Body Surveillance Subscale of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale Sociocultural Attitudes Scale for Appearance (SATAQ-3).</i>	The use of social networks, in general, was associated with concerns about body image. Photographic activity was the main activity associated with such concern.
Howard et al. (2017) United States	445 black women and 477 white women	Examining racial differences in the relationship between the use of social networks, body satisfaction and symptoms of eating disorders. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ-16)	The inappropriate use of social networks (considered as the use of social networks to obtain feedback from other people) was positively associated with levels of body dissatisfaction and symptoms of eating disorders, regardless of race.
Hendrickse et al. (2017) Florida	185 female graduation students	Examining the relationship between photographic activities (photo viewing) on Instagram, body satisfaction and pursuit for thinness. Cross-sectional correlational outlining.	Subscale of the Eating Disorder Inventory (EDI)	The photographic activities were predictors of the desire for thinness and body dissatisfaction, with the variable appearance comparison as a mediator.

Table 2

Cont.

Author (year)	Sample	Objective / Outlining	Instruments for assessing BI	Main results
Slater et al. (2017) England	160 female graduation students	Examining the impact of exposure to Instagram images with the hashtag <i>Fitspiration</i> vs. images/quotes about self-compassion vs. control group on body satisfaction, body appreciation, negative mood, and self-compassion. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	Body satisfaction by visual analog scale (VAS). Body Appreciation Scale, adaptada para o estudo.	Higher levels of body satisfaction, body appreciation and self-compassion, and lower levels of negative mood among those exposed to quotes of self-compassion vs. group control. Lower levels of self-compassion when exposed to <i>Fitspiration</i> vs. group control.
Abbas and Karadavut (2017) Turkey	151 candidates to plastic surgery (aesthetic) of male gender.	Investigating which variables predict the reasons that lead to the pursuit for cosmetic plastic surgery, including the use of social networks. Exploratory cross-sectional outlining.	Body Image Scale	The frequent use of social networks, more time spent on television and lower levels of body satisfaction were predictive factors of the search for cosmetic surgery.
Tiggemann and Slater (2017) Australia	438 female adolescents.	Assessing the relationship between the use of Facebook and the concern with body image. Longitudinal outlining.	<i>Drive for Thinness subscale do Eating Disorder Inventory. Objectified Body Consciousness Scale.</i>	The longer use of Facebook was associated with increased concern with body image.
Eckler et al. (2017) United States	881 female graduation students.	Assessing the association between time spent on Facebook and satisfaction with body image. Exploratory cross-sectional outlining.	<i>Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ).</i>	Negative association between time spent on Facebook and body satisfaction. The time spent on Facebook was also associated with higher levels of appearance comparison.
Robinson et al. (2017) Australia	106 female graduation students.	Investigating the impact of exposure to <i>fitspiration</i> images (lean and athletic bodies) vs. exposure to images of lean (but not athletic) bodies in body satisfaction. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	Body satisfaction by visual analog scale (VAS).	Exposure to images of <i>fitspiration</i> content generated higher levels of body dissatisfaction vs. images of lean but not athletic bodies.
Lira et al. (2017) Brazil	212 female adolescents of a public school.	Check the relationship between the use of social networks and body image. Exploratory cross-sectional outlining.	Escala Brasileira de Silhuetas (Brazilian Scale of Silhouettes). <i>Sociocultural Attitudes Scale for Appearance (SATAQ-3).</i>	Daily access greater than 10 times/day to Facebook and Instagram increased the chance of body dissatisfaction by 6.57 and 4.47 times, respectively.
Flynn (2016) United States	501 female and male graduation students.	Evaluating the effects of exposure to images of ideal bodies on Facebook on body image. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	<i>The Body Area Satisfaction Scale (BASS) do Multidimensional Body-Self.</i>	No significant effects of exposure to images of ideal bodies on body image.
de Vries et al. (2016) Netherlands	604 female and male adolescent students.	Investigating the impact of the use of social networks on body image. Longitudinal outlining.	<i>The Body Area Satisfaction Scale (BASS) do Multidimensional Body-Self</i>	The frequent use of social networks predicts greater body dissatisfaction. There was no difference between the genders.
Brown and Tiggemann (2016) Australia	138 female graduation students.	Assessing the effect of exposure to Instagram vs. celebrity images of unknown (but equally thin) people vs. control situation (travel photos) on body image. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	Body satisfaction by visual analog scale (VAS).	Higher levels of body dissatisfaction with exposure to celebrities as well as unknown and thin people, compared to the control situation. This effect was mediated by comparing appearance.
Hicks and Brown (2016) United Kingdom	269 pregnant women.	Assessing the relationship between the use of Facebook and body self-image. Exploratory cross-sectional outlining.	Questionnaire to assess Body Satisfaction in pregnant women developed by the authors, with questions related to body changes during pregnancy.	Pregnant women who had a Facebook profile had higher levels of concern with body image compared to those who did not.

Table 2

Cont.

Author (year)	Sample	Objective / Outlining	Instruments for assessing BI	Main results
Sampasa-Kanyinga et al. (2016) Canada	4.468 female and male adolescent students.	Checking the associations between the use of social networking websites (SNWs) and self-perception and satisfaction with body weight.	Satisfaction with body weight assessed by a questionnaire constructed by the authors.  <i>Body Satisfaction Scale for Women.</i> <i>Body Shame Scale of 4 items.</i>	Among women, daily use > 2h/day of SNWs increased the likelihood of dissatisfaction with body weight and the desire to lose weight.
Strubel et al. (2016) United States	796 female graduation students.	Assessing the relationship between the use of Facebook and the internalization of beauty ideals and body satisfaction. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	<i>Sociocultural Attitudes Scale for Appearance (SATAQ-3).</i>  <i>Body Area Satisfaction Scale (BASS).</i>	The use of Facebook was positively related to the internalization of beauty ideals, but it was not related to body satisfaction.
Cohen and Blaszczynski (2016) Australia	193 female graduation students.	Verifying the relationship between exposure to Facebook vs. conventional media in body satisfaction and appearance comparison. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	<i>Sociocultural Attitudes Scale for Appearance (SATAQ-3).</i>	The appearance comparison was predictive of changes in body satisfaction only with exposure to Facebook. The type of exposure did not moderate the relationship between comparison of appearance and changes in body satisfaction.
Fardouly et al. (2015) Australia	112 female graduation students.	Investigating the effect of exposure to Facebook on body satisfaction and mood. Experimental longitudinal cut outlining.	Body satisfaction by visual analog scale (VAS).	No difference in body satisfaction with exposure to Facebook vs. control situation (domestic crafts website).
Fardouly and Vartanian (2015) Australia	227 female graduation students.	Assessing the association between Facebook use and body image concerns, and checking whether the appearance comparison is associated with these concerns. Cross-sectional correlational outlining.	<i>Body Dissatisfaction subscale (BD).</i> <i>Drive for Thinness subscale (DFT).</i>	Positive association between the use of Facebook and concerns about body image, which was mediated by comparing appearance in general and comparing appearance with close friends, distant colleagues, and celebrities.
McLean et al. (2015) Australia	101 female graduation students.	Evaluating the association between the use of social media, especially in relation to posting <i>selfies</i> , with body satisfaction and with eating restriction behavior. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	<i>The 10-item Body Dissatisfaction subscale do Eating Disorders Inventory.</i>	Higher levels of body dissatisfaction and restricted eating behavior were observed among users who shared <i>selfies</i> on social networks more frequently.
Tiggemann and Zaccardo (2015) Australia	130 female graduation students.	Investigating the effect of exposure to <i>Fitspiration</i> images on body self-image, mood, and self-esteem. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	Body satisfaction by visual analog scale (VAS).	Higher levels of body dissatisfaction and negative mood, and lower levels of self-esteem, with exposure to images of <i>Fitspiration</i> vs. control situation (travel images).
Meier and Gray (2014) United States	103 female students.	Investigating the effects of using Facebook on body image. Cross-sectional correlational outlining.	<i>The 8-item Weight Satisfaction subscale do Body-Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BES).</i>	The time spent on Facebook in photographic activities (exposure to appearance), and not the total time spent on this platform, was associated with greater body dissatisfaction, desire for thinness, internalization of the ideal of thin body and self-objectification.
Tiggemann and Slater (2013) Australia	1.087 female highschool students.	Checking associations between the use of Facebook and the concern with body image. Experimental cross-sectional outlining.	<i>Objectified Body Consciousness Scale-Youth.</i>	The use of Facebook was associated with higher levels of concern with body image. Internet exposure (in general) has been associated with greater internalization of the lean body ideal.
Smith et al. (2013) United States	232 female graduation students.	Analyzing the impact of Facebook misuse on body satisfaction, eating behavior and the presence of bulimic symptoms. Experimental longitudinal cut outlining.	<i>The subscale of Body Dissatisfaction (EDI).</i>	Misuse of Facebook (defined as the tendency to seek negative social assessments and/or to engage in social comparisons via Facebook) was a predictor of increased body dissatisfaction, bulimic symptoms, and episodes of overeating.

The period with the largest number of published studies was between 2017 and 2016 (n=17; 51.5%), and among the studies evaluated, the oldest were published in 2013 (Smith et al., 2013; Tiggemann, & Slater, 2013). The articles found are predominantly international (n=31; 96.8%), with only 1 national study (Lira et al., 2017). The country with the largest number of publications was Australia (n = 13; 40.6%).

The sample size ranged from 101 (smallest sample size) to 4,468 (largest sample size) participants, and the minority of studies reported having performed a sample calculation (n=04; 12.5%). The search with the smallest sample size was that of McLean et al. (2015), and the one with the largest sample number was that of Sampasa-Kanyinga et al. (2016). Most of the studies were carried out exclusively with women (n=27; 84.3%), followed by studies that included men and women in their sample (n = 03; 9.37%). Only two studies were conducted exclusively with male subjects (Abbas & Karadavut, 2017; Griffiths et al., 2018). The age range of the participants ranged from 17 to 30 years old, with the exception of two studies in which the average age of the participants was 12 to 14 years old and 13 years old (Burnette et al., 2017; McLean et al., 2015).

Most studies were carried out with undergraduate students (n=18; 56.2%), such as the study by Strubel et al. (2016), followed by studies with high school students (n=07; 21, 8%). Only two studies were carried out with specific audiences, 01 (3.1%) developed with pregnant women and 01 (3.1%) with men who wished to perform cosmetic plastic surgery.

Regarding the outlining, most studies (n=19; 59.3%) fit into the outlining of experimental type, followed by exploratory (n=05; 15.6%) and correlational (n=05; 15.6 %). Only one study (3.1%) was observational. Most studies (n=27; 84.3%) are cross-sectional and only five (15.6%) are longitudinal.

The publications had a predominantly exclusive focus on the quantitative methodology (n=31; 96.8%), with the exception of one article that had mixed focus (Burnette et al. 2017). The social network most evaluated by the researchers was the Facebook platform (n=11; 34.3%), followed by Instagram (n=08; 25.0%). Studies that did not evaluate a specific social network, but the use of these platforms in general, totaled (n=11; 34.3%) and one of them (3.1%) evaluated the Hyves platform, which is a specific social network of Holland, and the platform Pinterest (3.1%).

## Social Networks and Body Image

Different instruments were used to assess image and body satisfaction, with emphasis on the use of Visual Analog Scales (VAS) in these assessments, used in 31.2% (n = 10) of the works. The Sociocultural Attitudes Scale for Appearance (STAQ-3), which aims to assess the extent to

which women incorporate social values or attitudes about beauty and appearance that are present in traditional media, was used in four (12.5%) studies. Some authors chose to create their own questionnaires to assess their participants' body image (n=04; 12.5%).

In all studies, (n=32; 100.0%) the authors sought to assess how exposure to social networks affects the image and body satisfaction of their users. In some studies, the authors also sought to evaluate other variables, such as the eating behavior of the participants (n=04; 12.5%), the state of mood (n=5; 15.6%), self-esteem (n=2; 6.2%) and the appearance comparison (n=6; 18.7%). In order to assess the use of social networks, in studies that did not have an experimental outlining, the authors used questionnaires that were not validated or prepared by the authors themselves, containing questions such as: "How often do you access Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat?"; "How many hours a day did they spend on social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and Instagram?"; "What social networks do you use" ?; "What is the benefit or harm of following social media"?

In almost all studies (n=28; 87.5%), the results indicated that the use of social networks had a negative impact on their users' body self-image, especially in relation to the increase in body dissatisfaction. Only 03 studies (9.3%) found no association between the use of social networks and body satisfaction, which were those of Fardouly et al. (2015), in which the participants had an increased negative mood with use, but without impact on body satisfaction; of Strubel et al. (2016), whose results indicated that the use of Facebook was positively related to the internalization of beauty ideals, but it was not related to body satisfaction; and that of Flynn (2016), in which exposure to images of ideal bodies on Facebook did not generate significant effects on body self-image. It is also worth noting that in the study by Slater et al. (2017), the images that contained quotes of self-compassion had a positive impact on the body satisfaction of the evaluated participants. The meaning of the term self-compassion mentioned in the study is "the individual's ability to recognize and accept that all human beings have imperfections and will find themselves, at different times in their lives, in situations where they will feel inadequate". Studies carried out by Cohen et al. (2017) and Slater et al. (2019), showed that body images posted positively can be beneficial to avoid body dissatisfaction.

Among the negative repercussions found in the studies, we can highlight that exposure to social networks: (a) increased levels of dissatisfaction with body self-image, (b) influenced the body type that users would like to have, translated by the thin body considered ideal, (c) increased levels of negative mood, especially after exposure to "ideal" body images of web-celebrities, (d) reduced levels of self-esteem, and (e) was positively associated with symptoms of eating disorders.

## DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to conduct an integrative review of the growing body of research that investigated the repercussions of the use of social networks on the body image of their users. This integrative literature review pointed out that, in almost all the studies analyzed, social networks had a negative impact on their users' body image; and that even when social networks did not directly interfere with body image, their use had a negative impact on the mood and self-esteem of these individuals, variables that are directly related to body satisfaction.

Satisfaction with body image can be understood as a process that brings together not only biological aspects, but also involves emotional aspects. It is a multidimensional phenomenon, with emphasis on the evaluative dimensions (difference between the current body and the body considered ideal) and affective (how much the individual suffers due to this change) (Frost & Mckelvie, 2004; Sato et al., 2011). The frequent exposure to images of idealized bodies published in the media, and the discrepancy of the ideals of beauty built by society in face of the body reality of most people, increase the chances of dissatisfaction with their size and body shape, which can trigger negative mood states, low self-esteem and eating disorders (Hawkins et al., 2004; Moor, 2009).

Despite the findings showing that in almost all studies there was a negative impact of the use of social networks on body satisfaction, it is worth mentioning that in the study by Slater et al. (2017), the authors found that images containing quotes of self-compassion had a positive impact on the body satisfaction of the evaluated participants, with higher levels of body appreciation and lower levels of negative mood, signaling that the repercussions generated on body satisfaction and positive or negative mood seem to be related to the type of message and image to which the individual is exposed. Even the type of activity that the person performs on social networks can generate different repercussions in terms of body satisfaction, as shown in the study by Meier and Gray (2014), who found that only the time spent on Facebook specifically in photographic activities (which include, predominantly, observation of body images of other peers), and not the total time spent on this platform, was associated with greater body dissatisfaction, desire for thinness and internalization of the ideal lean body.

The relationship between media and body dissatisfaction seems to be mediated by Social Comparison, specifically by comparing appearance. Individuals in general, and women in particular, tend to regularly assess their appearance by comparing themselves with other peers, and there is a tendency for the greater the comparison of appearances, the greater the body dissatisfaction (Leyahey et al., 2007; Myers & Crowther, 2009). With the use of social networks, there are many opportunities that users have to compare their bodies with body standards considered ideal, which are

widely disseminated in this type of media and, consequently, to develop and/or increase levels of dissatisfaction with their own body, since these patterns are exclusive, unreal and do not encompass the great diversity of body shapes presented by the population.

In addition to the negative repercussions on body image, some studies have also observed negative repercussions on the mood state (Slater et al., 2019; Mills et al., 2018; Slater et al., 2017; Fardouly et al., 2015; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2016), in self-esteem (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2016; Strubel et al., 2016) and in the eating behavior of participants using social networks (Griffiths et al., 2018; McLean et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2013). These results indicate the extent of the emotional damage that may result from their use, and the association between these losses and body dissatisfaction, which is known to favor the development of eating disorders, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and reduced quality of life (Souza & Alvarenga, 2016). Since being within the body standards required by today's society seems to confer a sense of belonging, self-confidence, power and status, generating positive feelings that are related to health and well-being (Souza et al., 2013), being out of these patterns end up generating the opposite effect.

The female audience seems to be more susceptible to media influences on body satisfaction (Ogden, 1996; Gonçalves & Martinez, 2014; Souza & Alvarenga, 2016), even when it comes to social networks, which may justify the fact that most studies analyzed in this review were made with women. Most media dictate and teach how women should be: beautiful, thin, modern, desired by men and envied by other women, as well as having style and being connected to the latest trends. Consequently, women become more susceptible to these stereotypes of beauty and behavior, striving to the maximum to achieve the desired physical excellence and acceptable behaviors by society (Silva et al., 2016).

However, it is important to consider that men are not immune to the influence of social networks on body image. The study by de Vries et al. (2016), for example, showed that the frequent use of social networks predicts greater body dissatisfaction among participants of both sexes; and the work of Abbas and Karadavut (2017), carried out only with male individuals, concluded that the frequent use of social networks, the greater time spent on television and lower levels of body satisfaction were predictive factors for men wishing to perform cosmetic surgeries, indicating that men are also influenced by the content of social networks. The work by Griffiths et al. (2018) also showed that the greater frequency of the use of social media (in particular Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat) corresponded to greater concerns about body image and symptoms of eating disorders.

The year of publications indicates that the use of social networks is a recent phenomenon. Most published studies are

concentrated in the years 2016 and 2017, and the oldest year of publication dates from 2013. The platforms most searched by the authors were Facebook, created in 2004, followed by Instagram, created in 2010. Despite Facebook having been created in 2004, its last major expansion occurred in 2006, with the extension of access permission to any internet user over the age of 13 and with a valid email address (Correia & Moreira, 2014). The use of social networks is an important part of the contemporary life style, disseminating values, concepts and norms, and can both influence values and aesthetic standards incorporated by society and transmit and reinforce social ideals related to the body (Furtado, 2009). The numbers of social networks reveal to us the dimension reached by these services in the context of the internet, despite being a recent phenomenon. It is estimated that the number of users who access Facebook and Instagram daily is around 400 million worldwide (Rocha et al., 2011; Chou & Edge, 2012).

It is worth mentioning the fact that 96.8% of the studies that make up the *corpus* of this review are international,

with only one national study published on the theme in 2017 (Lira et al., 2017). Although we live in a globalized era, the importance of cultural influences in the construction of both body image and satisfaction should not be disregarded, that is, culture plays a fundamental role in the way the individual perceives and desires their body image (Alves et al., 2009). In this sense, some caution is necessary in generalizing the findings made for all populations, especially when it comes to very different cultures.

Debates that aim to encompass reflections on corporeality, culture and advertising influences as potential sources in the constitution of a subjectivity not only individual, but also collective, have been advancing in literature, including Brazilian culture (Tilio, 2014; Goldenberg, 2011; Goulart, 2000; Miranda, 2007; Santolin, 2012). However, the great scarcity of studies in the national scenario that explore the repercussions of social networks on the body image of their users points to the need for the development of studies on this topic in the country, in order to advance in relation to their understanding.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study offers a series of information about the repercussions of social networks on the body image of their users, and contributes to expand the still small, but growing, body of studies that aim to broaden the understanding of the relationships between the use of social networks and body image. This literature review also made it possible to identify that social networks have a predominantly negative impact on their users' body image. It is worth remembering that this repercussion seems to be related to the type of image and message that is being disseminated, and also to the activities carried out during the use of these platforms, signaling the complexity of the theme.

The results found in the present review suggest that the (increasingly) thin body, excessively widespread in the media, is a strong influence factor in the self-perception of body image, and in the internalization of this body ideal, with incorporation or acceptance of its value, being able to affect not only attitudes, but also the personal behavior of the subjects (Cafri et al., 2005). In addition, it can generate distortions in the perception that individuals have in relation

to their own bodies, as well as the bodies of other people, generating a bodily relativization, causing bodies that were previously considered "normal" to be seen as "fat", and bodies that were synonymous with hunger, scarcity and even disease, are desired and seen as beautiful.

The relevant literature review evaluated articles indexed in databases that reach vast literature in the national and international scope, and included renowned journals in the health area, but did not cover all existing databases. Despite this, the studies analyzed indicate that social networks have a negative impact on their users' body image, increasing levels of body dissatisfaction. Based on these considerations, the importance of conducting research on this thematic axis is highlighted, notably on the national scene, given its current scarcity. Better understanding of this phenomenon is relevant, since it can support the establishment of timely interventions in order to minimize the negative repercussions of social networks not only on body satisfaction, but also on the mental and physical health of their users.

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