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Social Media Use, Glow-Up Culture, Body Dissatisfaction and Risk of Eating Disorders Among College Students in West Bengal, India: A Gendered Analysis

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ABSTRACT Viral social media trends related to physique have intensified social comparison tendencies among the youth, which have potentially contributed to body dissatisfaction and increased risk of eating disorders. The objective of the study was to assess the impact of social media on body dissatisfaction and risk of eating disorders among college students in West Bengal, India. A cross-sectional study was conducted. Using purposive sampling, an online questionnaire incorporating the Body Shape Questionnaire and Eating Attitudes Test was circulated. Among 301 students, 12.3 percent were at a high risk of developing eating disorders. Body dissatisfaction was associated with photo-editing practices and concern over likes on posts. Women seeking social media validation depicted a higher risk of disordered eating behaviour. Awareness of viral challenges predicted dissatisfaction and risk, with a greater vulnerability in women. Longitudinal studies are needed to explore underlying factors.