

# Pandemic vs body: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected young adults' body appreciation?

Sierra L.P. Tulloch, Devon J. Chazan, Lauren D. Goegan, & Lia M. Daniels

## INTRO

- Considering significant increases in social media use, mental health issues, and stagnant lifestyles during the pandemic, we sought to investigate how the pandemic has influenced young adults' (18-25 yrs.) perceptions of their bodies

## METHODS

- We used a multi-method design to explore body appreciation before and during the COVID-19 pandemic
- The pre-pandemic sample consisted of participants from a previous survey collected in the spring of 2019
- During-pandemic survey data was collected in the spring of 2021 (n=299)
- To match the during-pandemic sample, 299 pre-pandemic participants were randomly selected for analyses (N=598, Mage=21)
- 467 participants identified as women, 112 as men, 16 as non-binary, and 2 preferred not to disclose

## MEASURES

- The **Body Appreciation Scale (BAS-2)**
- The research team created additional scales about experiences during the pandemic that could be related to body appreciation:
  - Pandemic Impact:** employment status and impact on daily life
  - Physical Health:** nutrition, weight, and exercise
  - Videoconferencing Methods:** looking at own image on screen, and turning camera on/off during social, school, or work related meetings

# Young adults' body appreciation has worsened since the start of the pandemic.



## ANALYSES

- An independent-samples *t*-tests was run to determine if there was significant differences between the pre- and during-pandemic samples' ratings of body appreciation
- A multiple linear regression was also completed to examine the relationships between body appreciation and pandemic experience variables


## RESULTS

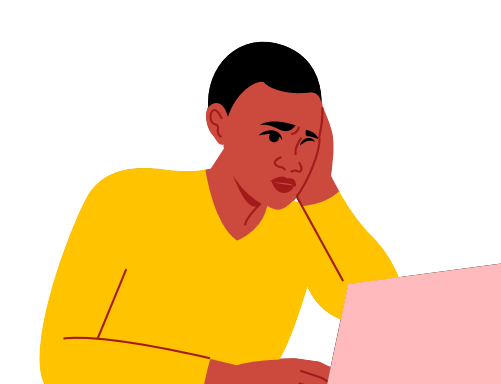
- Young adults' body appreciation was significantly lower during the COVID-19 pandemic than before the pandemic ( $t(598)=4.44, p=.000$ )
- The regression accounted for about 27% of the variance in body appreciation,  $F(5, 274)=21.94, p<0.001$


Regression Analysis Predicting Body Appreciation


	Coeff. $\beta$	LCI	UCI
Gender	-.04	-2.93	1.43
Age	-.10	-.67	.04
Pandemic Impact	.17*	.22	1.10
Physical Health	-.34**	-1.02	-.50
Videoconferencing Methods	-.38**	-1.45	-.78
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>.29</b>		

Note. \* $p<.005$ ; \*\* $p<.001$ ; LCI=lower confidence; UCI=upper confidence interval

**44%** Said they were extremely or quite a bit **distressed** over the past month. 

**75%** Agreed that they spent a lot of time looking at their **own image** on the screen when videoconferencing. 

**57%** Said that they sometimes or seldom felt **comfortable** in their body. 

**53%** Agreed that it was difficult to maintain **eating habits** that best suited their nutritional and lifestyle needs. 



Contact info: [stulloch@ualberta.ca](mailto:stulloch@ualberta.ca)  
References available upon request.