RCMOS – Revista Científica Multidisciplinar O Saber.
ISSN: 2675-9128. São Paulo - SP.
Year VII, v.1 2026 | Submission: July 3, 2026 | Accepted: July 6, 2026 | Publication: July 9, 2026

Influence of social media on adolescents' eating habits and its implications for public health: an integrative review

Influência das mídias sociais nos hábitos alimentares de adolescentes e suas implicações para a saúde pública: uma revisão integrativa

Influencia de las redes sociales en los hábitos alimentarios de los adolescentes y sus implicaciones para la salud pública: una revisión integrativa

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Abstract:
Introduction: Adolescence is a phase marked by intense biological, psychological, and social transformations, being a critical period for the establishment of eating habits and body image. In this context, the growth in the use of social media has raised concerns due to its influence on behaviors related to eating, body image, and mental health of adolescents. Objective: This study aimed to critically analyze, in light of recent scientific evidence, the influence of social media on the eating habits and body image of adolescents, considering the effects of screen time and its implications for public health. Methodology: This is an integrative literature review, with a qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive approach, carried out in the PubMed and SciELO databases. Original articles published between 2022 and 2026, in Portuguese and English, that directly addressed the relationship between social media, eating behavior, and body image in adolescents aged 10 to 19 years were included. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, eight studies comprised the final sample. Results and Discussion: The results demonstrated a consistent association between greater exposure to social media and increased body dissatisfaction, social comparison, higher consumption of ultra-processed foods, poorer diet quality, and a higher risk of eating disorders. It was also observed that adolescents frequently exposed to content related to physical appearance showed greater emotional vulnerability and a higher probability of developing inadequate eating behaviors. Furthermore, socioeconomic and environmental factors showed a significant influence on the eating habits of this population. Conclusion: It is concluded that social media exerts a relevant impact on the physical and mental health of adolescents, constituting an important challenge for public health. Therefore, the need for interdisciplinary strategies focused on nutritional education, the development of critical thinking regarding digital content, and the promotion of healthy habits among adolescents is highlighted.

Keywords:
social media; adolescents; eating behavior; body image; public health.

Resumo:
Introdução: A adolescência constitui uma fase marcada por intensas transformações biológicas, psicológicas e sociais, sendo um período crítico para o estabelecimento de hábitos alimentares e da percepção corporal. Nesse contexto, o crescimento do uso das mídias sociais tem despertado preocupação devido à sua influência sobre comportamentos relacionados à alimentação, imagem corporal e saúde mental de adolescentes. Objetivo: O presente estudo teve como objetivo analisar criticamente, à luz de evidências científicas recentes, a influência das mídias sociais nos hábitos alimentares e na percepção corporal de adolescentes, considerando os efeitos do tempo de exposição às telas e suas implicações para a saúde pública. Metodologia: Trata-se de uma revisão integrativa da literatura, de abordagem qualitativa, exploratória e

descritiva, realizada nas bases de dados PubMed e SciELO. Foram incluídos artigos originais publicados entre 2022 e 2026, nos idiomas português e inglês, que abordassem diretamente a relação entre mídias sociais, comportamento alimentar e percepção corporal em adolescentes entre 10 e 19 anos. Após aplicação dos critérios de inclusão e exclusão, oito estudos compuseram a amostra final. Resultados e Discussões: Os resultados demonstraram associação consistente entre maior exposição às mídias sociais e aumento da insatisfação corporal, comparação social, maior consumo de alimentos ultraprocessados, pior qualidade da dieta e maior risco para transtornos alimentares. Observou-se ainda que adolescentes expostos frequentemente a conteúdos relacionados à aparência física apresentaram maior vulnerabilidade emocional e maior probabilidade de desenvolver comportamentos alimentares inadequados. Além disso, fatores socioeconômicos e ambientais mostraram influência significativa sobre os hábitos alimentares dessa população. Conclusão: Conclui-se que as mídias sociais exercem impacto relevante sobre a saúde física e mental dos adolescentes, configurando-se como importante desafio para a saúde pública. Dessa forma, destaca-se a necessidade de estratégias interdisciplinares voltadas à educação alimentar, ao desenvolvimento do senso crítico frente aos conteúdos digitais e à promoção de hábitos saudáveis entre adolescentes.

Palavras-chave:
mídias sociais; adolescentes; comportamento alimentar; imagem corporal; saúde pública.

Resumen:
Introducción: La adolescencia constituye una etapa marcada por intensas transformaciones biológicas, psicológicas y sociales, siendo un período crítico para el establecimiento de hábitos alimentarios y de la percepción corporal. En este contexto, el crecimiento del uso de las redes sociales ha generado preocupación debido a su influencia sobre comportamientos relacionados con la alimentación, la imagen corporal y la salud mental de los adolescentes. Objetivo: El presente estudio tuvo como objetivo analizar críticamente, a la luz de evidencias científicas recientes, la influencia de las redes sociales en los hábitos alimentarios y en la percepción corporal de los adolescentes, considerando los efectos del tiempo de exposición a las pantallas y sus implicaciones para la salud pública. Metodología: Se trata de una revisión integrativa de la literatura, de enfoque cualitativo, exploratorio y descriptivo, realizada en las bases de datos PubMed y SciELO. Se incluyeron artículos originales publicados entre 2022 y 2026, en los idiomas portugués e inglés, que abordaran directamente la relación entre redes sociales, comportamiento alimentario y percepción corporal en adolescentes de entre 10 y 19 años. Tras la aplicación de los criterios de inclusión y exclusión, ocho estudios conformaron la muestra final. Resultados y Discusiones: Los resultados demostraron una asociación consistente entre una mayor exposición a las redes sociales y el aumento de la insatisfacción corporal, la comparación social, el mayor consumo de alimentos ultraprocesados, la peor calidad de la dieta y el mayor riesgo de trastornos alimentarios. También se observó que los adolescentes expuestos frecuentemente a contenidos relacionados con la apariencia física presentaron mayor vulnerabilidad emocional y mayor probabilidad de desarrollar comportamientos alimentarios inadecuados. Además, los factores socioeconómicos y ambientales mostraron una influencia significativa sobre los hábitos alimentarios de esta población. Conclusión: Se concluye que las redes sociales ejercen un impacto relevante sobre la salud física y mental de los adolescentes, configurándose como un importante desafío para la salud pública. De esta forma, se destaca la necesidad de estrategias interdisciplinarias orientadas a la educación alimentaria, al desarrollo del sentido crítico frente a los contenidos digitales y a la promoción de hábitos saludables entre adolescentes.

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Palabras clave:
redes sociales; adolescentes; comportamiento alimentario; imagen corporal; salud pública.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period marked by intense physical, psychological, and social transformations, being a crucial phase for the formation of eating habits and body image (Antoniassi) . *et al.* , 2024; Shi *et al.* , 2025). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2022), this stage encompasses individuals between 10 and 19 years of age, characterized as a time of consolidation of behaviors that may persist into adulthood. In this context, adolescents become more susceptible to external influences, especially those from the social and technological environment (Radwan) . *et al.* , 2025).

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the use of social media and electronic devices, especially among adolescents (WHO, 2022). Data indicates that approximately 74.4% of young people have excessive screen time, exceeding the recommended limit of two hours per day (Antoniassi) . *et al.* , 2024). This increase in screen time has been associated with lifestyle changes, including reduced physical activity, poorer diet quality, and increased consumption of ultra-processed foods (Antoniassi). *et al.* , 2024).

In addition to functioning as a means of communication, social media plays a significant role in disseminating content related to food, health, and aesthetic standards (Czubaj). *et al.* , 2025; Dahlgren *et al.* , 2024). Recent evidence indicates that frequent exposure to digital content is associated with changes in eating behavior and body image in adolescents, especially due to the influence of digital influencers and content focused on body aesthetics (Dahlgren) . *et al.* , 2024; Radwan *et al.* , 2025). However, much of this information lacks scientific basis, contributing to the spread of restrictive diets and idealized, often unattainable, body standards (Radwan). *et al.* , 2025). This constant exposure can negatively influence adolescents' body image, encouraging social comparisons and increasing dissatisfaction with their own bodies (Czubaj) . *et al.* , 2025; Dahlgren *et al.* , 2024).

Studies show that adolescents are highly vulnerable to these influences, with a significant risk observed for the development of eating disorders (de Valle & Wade, 2022; Jaruga-Sękowska , Staśkiewicz -

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Bartecka and Woźniak-Holecka , 2025). These disorders, such as anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating, can lead to significant consequences for physical and mental health, including nutritional deficits, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.

(Jaruga-Sękowska , Staśkiewicz-Bartecka and Woźniak-Holecka , 2025).

Furthermore, socioeconomic and environmental factors also influence the eating habits and behavior of adolescents (Antoniassi) . *et al.* , 2024). Aspects such as income, school environment, and access to spaces for physical activity can contribute to both healthy behaviors and inadequate eating patterns (Antoniassi) . *et al.* , 2024). Thus, the context in which the adolescent is embedded plays a fundamental role in the construction of their habits and choices (World Health Organization, 2021).

Given this scenario, the topic becomes highly relevant to public health, since inadequate eating habits, associated with the influence of social media, can contribute to an increase in the incidence of chronic non-communicable diseases, such as obesity, as well as psychological disorders (WHO, 2022; Roberto *et al.* , 2024). Recent evidence indicates that intensive use of social media is related to changes in body perception and greater dissatisfaction with one's own body (Czubaj) . *et al.* , 2025; Dahlgren *et al.* , 2024). Furthermore, frequent exposure to digital content may promote the development of inadequate eating behaviors (de Valle & Wade, 2022).

Furthermore, continuous exposure to aesthetic standards on social media can negatively impact the mental health of this population, generating anxiety and distortions in self-image (Roberto *et al.,* 2024). Given this impact, the strategic role of nutritionists and other health professionals stands out; by working to deconstruct unrealistic body goals and promote a balanced relationship with food, these professionals can mitigate the psychological damage of the digital environment (BRAZIL, 2022) **.** In this way, they become essential in guiding and promoting healthy eating habits among adolescents, acting in a preventive and educational manner (BRAZIL, 2014; WHO, 2022).

According to the World Health Organization, factors related to lifestyle and the digital environment exert a significant influence on the health of adolescents, representing an important contemporary challenge for health systems (World Health Organization, 2022). In this sense, increased screen time has also been associated with poorer eating habits, reinforcing the need for food and nutrition education strategies to promote health (Antoniassi). *et al.* , 2024; Roberto *et al.,* 2025).

In this context, the school environment is configured as a privileged space for health interventions, as it allows for continuous actions in food and nutrition education,

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the development of critical thinking regarding social media, and the encouragement of more conscious food choices (BRASIL, 2022). Thus, integrated action between schools and health professionals significantly contributes to the formation of healthy behaviors and the prevention of health problems in this population (Antoniassi) . *et al.* , 2024).

Given the above, this study aims to critically analyze, in light of recent scientific evidence, the influence of social media on the eating behavior and body image of adolescents aged 10 to 19, considering in an integrated way the effects of screen time and the social determinants that permeate this phenomenon. Furthermore, it seeks to deepen the understanding of the interrelationships between these factors, in order to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the area and to support the development of more effective intervention strategies in the field of public health.

METHODOLOGY

This study consists of an integrative literature review, with a qualitative approach, exploratory and descriptive in nature. This type of review allows for the synthesis and analysis of available scientific knowledge on a given topic, enabling a broader understanding of the influence of social media on the eating habits and body image of adolescents. The research was conducted based on the following guiding question: "How do social media influence the eating habits and body image of adolescents, and what are their implications for public health?"

PubMed (Public Medical Literature) database. Database) and SciELO (Scientific (Electronic Library Online), from March to June 2026. During this period, studies relevant to the topic were identified, selected, and analyzed, ensuring the updating and scientific relevance of the evidence included.

For the search strategy, English-language descriptors were used to broaden the scope of the results. The terms were combined using the Boolean operators AND and OR. The terms used in this research were: “ *social media* , *eating”. behavior* , *body image* and *adolescents* .”

The inclusion criteria adopted were: original articles (primary studies), available in full, published between 2022 and 2026, in Portuguese and English, that directly addressed the relationship between social media, eating behavior and/or body perception in adolescents aged between 10 and 19 years.

The exclusion criteria included: duplicate studies across databases, articles published outside the established period, incomplete publications, literature reviews, editorials, letters to the editor, simple abstracts, isolated case studies, and research that did not have a direct relationship with the guiding question or that did not specifically address the adolescent population.

The study selection process occurred in sequential and systematic stages. Initially, articles were identified in the databases using the defined search strategies. Next, a screening was conducted by reading the titles, excluding those that were not related to the topic. Subsequently, the abstracts were read, and the previously established inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied.

In the next stage, potentially eligible articles were submitted for full-text reading to verify their suitability to the study's objective and guiding question. After this careful analysis, only studies that fully met all the defined criteria were selected. At the end of the selection process, 8 scientific articles that met the established criteria for this integrative review were included.

It is worth noting that studies whose sample included young university students or young adults were retained in the final sample as long as they covered late adolescence (18 and 19 years old), since digital behavior and exposure to social media in this transitional phase resemble the patterns observed in younger adolescents.

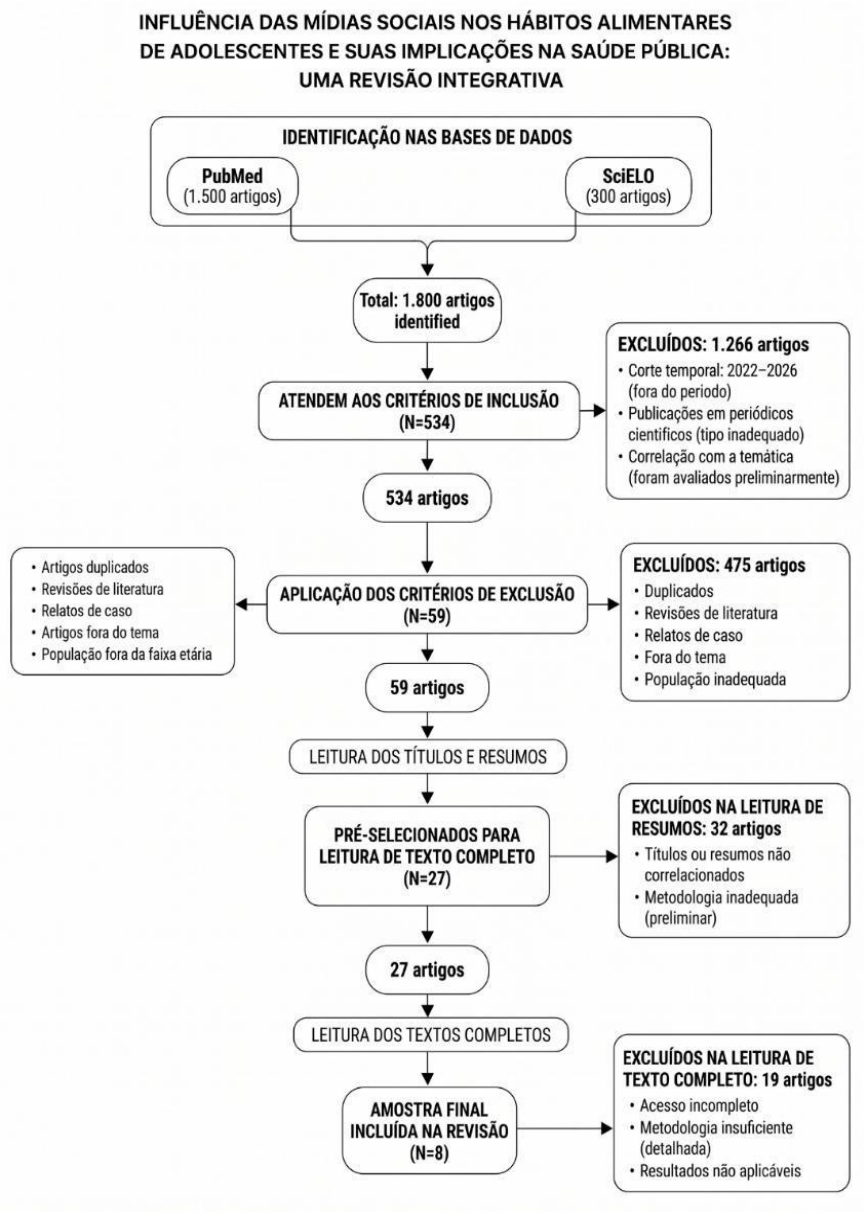
The data from the selected studies were systematically organized and analyzed, considering the following variables: author and year of publication, study location, methodological design, population investigated, objectives, methodology employed, and main results. This information supported the creation of the summary table and the critical analysis of the findings.

Figure 1 presents the flowchart for selecting the articles included in the integrative review. Initially, 1,800 articles were identified in the consulted databases, with 1,500 from PubMed and 300 from SciELO. After applying the inclusion criteria, 534 articles remained, and 1,266 studies that did not meet these initial filters were excluded at this stage.

Next, the exclusion criteria were applied by reading the titles, resulting in 59 articles. After reading the abstracts and removing duplicate articles, 27 studies remained for full-text review. In the end, after analysis, 8 articles fully met the established criteria and comprised the final sample of this review.

Figure 1 - Flowchart for selecting articles for review.

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Source: prepared by the authors, 2026.

Table 1 below summarizes the main information from the studies selected for this integrative review, including authors, year of publication, type of study, objectives, methodology used, and the main results found.

Table 1. Summary of articles analyzed for review.

Articles	Author, year of publication, Location of study	Outline nto , type of study and N	Study objec-tives	Methodology	Key findings

1	Radwan, H. *et al.* 2025 Emirates Arabs	Observational study al transversal. N = 590 teenagers	Investigate the associations between media use social issues, body dissatisfaction, and the risk of behavior food inadequate and disordered s in adolescents.	Application of structured questionnaires and validated (like EAT-26) for behavior screening risky food intake, assessment of time spent on social media, and levels of dissatisfaction with body image.	A strong correlation was identified between prolonged use of social media and increased body dissatisfaction. Adolescents continuously exposed to content focused on aesthetics scored higher on the EAT26, indicating a high risk for developing disorders and Inadequate eating behaviors.
2	Antoniassi *et al.* 2024 Brazil	Study transversal N = 1,200 adolescents	Assess the impact of screen time on eating habits.	Study conducted with teenagers from 30 state schools in Curitiba/PR. Questionnaires were administered. about usage time of television, video game and devices electronics, in addition to the frequency of food consumption. Characteristics were also analyzed. socioeconomic as and of	It was observed that 74.4% of Teenagers exhibited excessive screen time. Increased screen time was associated with increased consumption of ultra-processed foods, lower diet quality, and reduced healthy eating habits. Furthermore, socioeconomic factors and characteristics of the school environment also contributed. They significantly influenced the eating behaviors assessed.

				environment school. A Statistical analysis was performed using multilevel Poisson regression.	
3	Shi, X. *et al.* 2025 States United	Observational study longitudinal and transverse al. N = 1.940 teenagers	To investigate the longitudinal and cross-sectional relationships between social media use (addiction and screen time) and symptoms of binge eating in adolescents. Assessing moderations by sex and BMI.	Analysis Transitional data from 3 annual waves (*ABCD Study*). Assessment of social media addiction (SMA) by self-report and of binge eating symptoms by protocol. structured KSADS-5 (parents) and teenagers).	The symptoms of dependence The psychological impact of social media (and not the number of hours spent online) showed a strong association. This cross-sectional and prospective study examined episodes of binge eating. The study revealed that this compulsive behavior was even more pronounced in male adolescents, varying according to their initial Body Mass Index (BMI).
4	Dahlgren *et al.* 2024 Norway	Cross-sectional study. N = 1.558 adolescents	Investigate the association between media use social, pressure aesthetics and symptoms related to eating disorders.	Application of questionnaires Regarding the use of social media, internalization of ideals of appearance, pressure aesthetics and symptoms of eating disorders.	Intense use of social media has been associated with greater internalization of idealized body standards, increased pressure related to appearance, and a higher risk of symptoms consistent with eating disorders.

5	Czubaj *et al.* 2025 Poland	Cross-sectional study. N = 211 adolescents	Assessing the influence of exposure to content *fitspiration* social media regarding body image perception in teenagers.	Questionnaires were administered regarding sociodemographic characteristics. cas , use of social media, exposure to content *fitspiration* satisfaction body and self-esteem, using validated instruments for body image assessment. The data were analyzed statistically to verify associations. between exposure to social media and body perception.	*fitspiration* content was associated with greater body dissatisfaction. Social comparison and internalization of idealized aesthetic standards. The girls showed greater vulnerability to the impacts of social media, reinforcing the need for health education actions and literacy media outreach for the prevention of these problems.
6	de Valle & Wade 2022 Australia	Clinical trial randomized the. N = 175 young people	To assess the impact of exposure to social media content on the risk of eating disorders.	Controlled exposure to contents digital related to appearance body and food, followed by psychological evaluation.	Frequent exposure to content focused on body image has increased body dissatisfaction and risk indicators for eating disorders.

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7	JarugaSękowska, StaśkiewiczBartecka and WoźniakHolecka, 2025 Poland	Observational study al N = 1.514 adolescents	To investigate the impact of social media use on the risk of development ento of eating disorders and self-esteem levels in adolescents and young people adults, performing a stratified psychosocial analysis.	Application of psychological scales and questionnaires on eating behavior, Self-esteem and the use of social media.	An association was observed. A significant correlation exists between heavy use of social media, body dissatisfaction, and a higher risk of disorders. Dietary habits, especially among female adolescents.
8	Roberto *et al.* 2024 Brazil	Cross-sectional observational study . N = 2.964 school	Evaluate the association between use of screens, Food consumption and excess weight in schoolchildren.	Application of questionnaires on screen time, eating habits, and anthropometric indicators. s.	Excessive screen use has been associated with higher consumption of ultra-processed foods, poorer food quality and higher prevalence of
					excess weight among the schoolchildren evaluated.

Source: prepared by the authors, 2026.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Eight studies published between 2022 and 2025, conducted in different sociocultural contexts, including Brazil, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Norway, Poland, and Australia, were analyzed. This diversity of scenarios demonstrates that the relationship between the digital environment, food, and body image is not limited to a local reality, but constitutes a problem of international scope, with direct repercussions for public health, especially as it involves adolescents at a stage of greater physical, emotional, and social vulnerability.

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In general, observational and cross-sectional studies predominated, accompanied by one longitudinal study and one randomized clinical trial. This methodological characteristic allows for the understanding of important associations between social media use, screen time, body dissatisfaction, food consumption, and risk for eating disorders. Although cross-sectional designs have limitations regarding the establishment of causality, the convergence of findings among research from different countries strengthens the evidence that the digital environment acts as a relevant factor in the construction of habits and body perceptions during adolescence. In this sense, the discussion of the results should be understood not only as an isolated description of the studies, but as an integrated analysis of a phenomenon that involves mental health, eating behavior, school environment, social determinants, and the need for preventive public policies.

Among the studies analyzed, Radwan *et al.* (2025) conducted a cross-sectional observational study with 590 adolescents in the United Arab Emirates, seeking to understand the associations between social media use, body dissatisfaction, and risk of inappropriate eating behaviors. The research used structured questionnaires and validated instruments, including the EAT-26, allowing for the assessment of both social media exposure time and risk indicators for eating disorders. The authors identified a strong correlation between prolonged social media use and increased body dissatisfaction, especially among adolescents continuously exposed to content focused on aesthetics, idealized body image, weight loss, and physical appearance.

These findings are important because they demonstrate that social media acts not only as neutral spaces for interaction, but also as environments for social comparison and reinforcement of idealized body standards. When adolescents frequently consume content that associates personal value with physical appearance, thinness, body definition, or strict control of diet, the possibility of internalizing these standards increases. In the field of public health, this finding reinforces the need for preventive strategies focused on the critical use of social networks, especially in schools and primary care services, where it is possible to develop educational actions before inappropriate behaviors become entrenched.

Results related to the impact of the digital environment on eating habits were also observed by Antoniassi. *et al.* (2024), in a cross-sectional study conducted in Brazil with 1,200 adolescents from 30 state schools in Curitiba, Paraná. Unlike Radwan *et al.* (2025), who emphasized body dissatisfaction and the risk of eating disorders, Antoniassi *et al.*

(2024) focused their analysis on screen time, diet quality, and the characteristics of the school environment. The authors identified that 74.4% of adolescents had excessive screen time, a condition associated with higher consumption of ultra-processed foods, lower diet quality, and a reduction in healthy eating habits.

The comparison between Radwan *et al.* (2025) and Antoniassi *et al.* (2024) allows us to observe two complementary dimensions of the same problem. While the first study highlights the influence of social networks on body perception and the risk of disordered eating behaviors, the second demonstrates that screen time is also related to less healthy food choices. Thus, the impact of digital media is not limited to the psychological field or body image, but reaches concrete food consumption practices, such as increased intake of ultra-processed foods and poorer diet quality. This convergence is especially relevant to public health, as inadequate eating habits in adolescence can persist into adulthood and contribute to an increased risk of obesity, non-communicable chronic diseases, and mental health problems.

Antoniassi 's study *et al.* (2024) refers to the influence of socioeconomic factors and the school environment on eating behaviors. By considering characteristics of the school environment, the authors broaden the discussion beyond the individual responsibility of the adolescent, demonstrating that food choices are also conditioned by access, food availability, school routine, and the social context in which the young person is embedded. This point complements Radwan 's findings. *et al.* (2025), as it indicates that preventing the impacts of social media should be linked to broader strategies, including promoting adequate nutrition in the school environment, regulating the advertising of ultra-processed foods, strengthening Food and Nutrition Education (FNE) actions, and encouraging the creation of spaces that favor healthy choices.

Shi *et al.* (2025) analyzed longitudinal and cross-sectional data from 1,940 adolescents in the United States, investigating the relationship between social media use, symptoms of psychological dependence on these platforms, and episodes of binge eating. The study differs from others by evaluating not only the amount of time spent online, but primarily the component of dependence or problematic use of social media. The authors observed that symptoms of psychological dependence on social networks, more than the number of hours of use, showed a cross-sectional and prospective association with symptoms of binge eating, indicating that the quality of the adolescent's relationship with the digital environment may be more relevant than time spent in isolation.

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The findings of Shi *et al.* (2025) deepen the understanding of Antoniassi 's results. *et al.* (2024). While the Brazilian study indicates that excessive screen time is associated with poorer diet quality, Shi *et al.* (2025) suggest that the emotional and compulsive dimension of social media use may play an even more significant role in the occurrence of disordered eating behaviors. This analysis is important because it shifts the discussion from an exclusively quantitative view, focused only on screen time, to a broader approach that considers digital addiction, impulsivity, emotional distress, and problematic relationships with food. Therefore, public health should consider not only recommendations to reduce screen time, but also actions focused on mental health, self-control, media literacy, and early identification of signs of compulsive eating.

Furthermore, Shi *et al.* (2025) observed that the association between social media addiction and binge eating varied according to sex and initial body mass index, with a stronger relationship observed in male adolescents in certain contexts. This data broadens the discussion because it demonstrates that the impacts of social media do not affect all adolescents homogeneously. Although many studies point to greater female vulnerability to body dissatisfaction, the findings of Shi *et al.* (2025) indicate that boys can also present significant risks, especially when there is problematic use of digital platforms. Thus, preventive strategies should not be directed only at girls, but at the entire adolescent population, respecting differences in gender, nutritional status, self-esteem, and psychosocial context.

Dahlgren 's study *et al.* (2024), conducted with 1,558 adolescents in Norway, analyzed the relationship between social media use, aesthetic pressure, internalization of appearance ideals, and symptoms related to eating disorders more specifically. The authors found that intense use of social media was associated with greater internalization of idealized body standards, increased pressure related to appearance, and a higher risk of symptoms consistent with eating disorders. These results corroborate Radwan's findings. *et al.* (2025), in demonstrating that exposure to digital content focused on the body and appearance promotes social comparisons and body dissatisfaction.

Dahlgren 's contribution *et al.* (2024) highlight that the influence of social media occurs through well-defined psychosocial mechanisms, such as the internalization of appearance ideals and aesthetic pressure. This means that adolescents not only view content about idealized bodies, but may also incorporate them as a reference for normality, beauty, and social acceptance. When this process is combined with restrictive diets, compensatory eating practices, or an intense desire for body modification, the risk

of developing inappropriate eating behaviors increases. In comparison with Antoniassi *et al.* (2024), who emphasize food consumption and screen time, Dahlgren *et al.* (2024) expand the discussion by demonstrating that the digital environment also influences symbolic and emotional dimensions related to the body.

In a complementary way, Czubaj *et al. (2025) investigated, in Poland, the influence of exposure to fitspiration*- type content on body image perception in 211 adolescents. This content, often presented as motivational and associated with healthy living, can reinforce rigid aesthetic standards, excessive valuation of physical appearance, and constant body comparison. The study identified that greater exposure to this type of content was associated with greater body dissatisfaction, social comparison, and internalization of idealized aesthetic standards, especially among girls. Thus, Czubaj *et al. (2025) complement* Dahlgren 's findings. *et al.* (2024), as they demonstrate that even content seemingly linked to health and physical exercise can produce negative effects when it reinforces standardized body types and unattainable goals.

The relationship between Dahlgren *et al.* (2024) and Czubaj *et al.* (2025) is central to this review, as both studies demonstrate that the body aesthetics disseminated on social media can go beyond inspiration and become a source of pressure, comparison, and suffering. This point is especially relevant to public health, as many digital messages associated with healthy eating, physical activity, or weight loss circulate without professional guidance and without considering body diversity, growth phase, nutritional needs, and the mental health of adolescents. Therefore, health promotion actions should avoid moralizing discourses about food and body image, prioritizing educational approaches that value autonomy, critical thinking, self-esteem, and a healthy relationship with food.

The randomized clinical trial developed by de Valle and Wade (2022) in Australia, involving 175 young people, makes an important methodological contribution by experimentally evaluating the impact of exposure to digital content related to body image and eating. Unlike cross-sectional studies, which identify associations, this design allows for the observation of more direct effects of exposure on psychological and behavioral indicators. The authors found that content focused on body image increased body dissatisfaction and risk indicators for eating disorders, strengthening the hypothesis that frequent contact with this type of material can contribute to negative changes in body perception and eating behavior.

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ISSN: 2675-9128. São Paulo - SP.
Year VII, v.1 2026 | Submission: July 3, 2026 | Accepted: July 6, 2026 | Publication: July 9, 2026

The results of de Valle and Wade (2022) reinforce and further support Radwan 's observational findings. *et al.* (2025), Dahlgren *et al.* (2024) and Czubaj *et al.* (2025). When analyzed together, these studies indicate that exposure to content about appearance is not only associated with greater body dissatisfaction, but can also act as a trigger or intensifier of risky eating behaviors. This evidence has important implications for public policy, as it reinforces the need for prevention programs in schools, media literacy campaigns, family guidance on the use of social media, and training for health professionals to recognize early signs of body and eating distress.

Jaruga-Sękowska , Staśkiewicz-Bartecka and Woźniak-Holecka , (2025), Also, in a study conducted in Poland, 1,514 adolescents and young adults were analyzed, investigating the impact of social media use on the risk of eating disorders and self-esteem levels. The authors identified a significant association between intense use of social media, body dissatisfaction, and a higher risk of eating disorders, mainly among female participants. This result directly relates to Czubaj's findings. *et al.* (2025), who also pointed to greater vulnerability of girls to the impacts of exposure to fitspiration content and idealized aesthetic standards.

The convergence between Jaruga-Sękowska , Staśkiewicz-Bartecka and WoźniakHolecka (2025), Czubaj *et al.* (2025) and Dahlgren *et al.* (2024) show that self-esteem, body image, and eating behavior are strongly interconnected in adolescence. Low self-esteem can make adolescents more susceptible to social comparison, while constant comparison can intensify body dissatisfaction and promote inadequate eating practices. This cycle demonstrates that eating disorders should not be understood solely as individual problems, but as phenomena influenced by social, cultural, and digital factors. Thus, prevention needs to involve interdisciplinary strategies, with the participation of nutritionists, psychologists, educators, family members, and public administrators.

Similarly, Roberto *et al.* (2024) conducted a cross-sectional observational study in Brazil with 2,964 schoolchildren, evaluating the association between screen use at night, food consumption, and overweight. The authors found that excessive screen use was associated with higher consumption of ultra-processed foods, poorer diet quality, and a higher prevalence of overweight among the schoolchildren evaluated. This study is similar to Antoniassi's. *et al.* (2024), also conducted in Brazil, demonstrated that screen exposure is related to less healthy eating patterns and potential harm to nutritional status.

A comparison between Roberto *et al.* (2024) and Antoniassi *et al.* (2024) strengthens the national evidence that screen time should be considered a relevant marker

in adolescent health surveillance and promotion actions. While Antoniassi *et al.* (2024) highlight the school environment and socioeconomic determinants, while Roberto *et al.* (2024) add the dimension of nighttime screen use and its relationship with food consumption at specific times, such as dinner and nighttime snacks. This finding is important because the use of devices at night can interfere with sleep, eating routines, appetite regulation, and food choices, favoring the consumption of foods with higher energy density and lower nutritional quality.

When analyzed together, the eight studies indicate that social media and screen time affect teenagers in different ways. Radwan *et al.* (2025), Dahlgren *et al.* (2024), Czubaj *et al.* (2025), de Valle and Wade (2022), and Jaruga-Sękowska , Staśkiewicz-Bartecka , and Woźniak-Holecka (2025) primarily emphasize the relationship between digital exposure, social comparison, body dissatisfaction, self-esteem, and risk for eating disorders. On the other hand, Antoniassi *et al.* (2024), Shi *et al.* (2025) and Roberto *et al.* (2024) expand this analysis by demonstrating associations with consumption of ultra-processed foods, poorer diet quality, binge eating, excess weight and socio-environmental factors. Thus, the influence of social media does not present itself as a single phenomenon, but as a set of physical, emotional, dietary and social repercussions that require integrated responses from public health.

The findings of this review reinforce the importance of the school environment as a strategic space for health promotion. Schools concentrate adolescents who are forming habits, allow for continuous educational actions, and foster dialogue between health professionals, teachers, families, and the community. Given the results presented, Food and Nutrition Education should include not only guidance on food groups or reducing the consumption of ultra-processed foods, but also discussions about the influence of social media, digital advertising, unrealistic body standards, restrictive diets, and the risks associated with constant comparison. In this way, the school can act as a space for preventing both nutritional problems and psychological distress related to body image.

Regarding the role of nutritionists, it was observed that the analyzed studies did not address in depth the specific role of this professional in the face of the influence of social media on the eating habits of adolescents. This absence represents a significant gap in the literature, considering that nutritionists possess fundamental competencies to act in the promotion of healthy eating, in Food and Nutrition Education, in the identification of risky eating behaviors , and in the construction of preventive strategies. Although this role does not appear as a central finding of the included articles, the results suggest a need for

greater inclusion of nutritionists in interdisciplinary actions aimed at adolescents, especially in schools and health services.

Given the body of evidence, it is observed that the impacts of social media on adolescents' eating habits and body image cannot be understood in isolation. They involve screen time, type of content consumed, psychological dependence on platforms, aesthetic pressure, self-esteem, nutritional status, school environment, socioeconomic factors, and access to healthy foods. Thus, the public health response must be equally comprehensive, integrating food and nutrition education, mental health care, school-based actions, family guidance, and adolescent protection policies. This approach strengthens the connection between the findings and the central focus of this review, highlighting that the influence of social media is an individual, social, and collective issue, with a direct impact on health promotion and the prevention of health problems in adolescence.

CONCLUSION

This integrative review allowed for a critical analysis of the influence of social media on the eating habits and body image of adolescents, highlighting that frequent use of these platforms is associated with significant negative impacts on this population. The selected studies demonstrated a relationship between greater exposure to social media, increased body dissatisfaction, social comparison, a higher risk of eating disorders, poorer diet quality, and increased consumption of ultra-processed foods.

The findings indicate that adolescence, being a phase of intense physical, psychological, and social transformations, presents greater vulnerability to digital content related to body aesthetics, restrictive diets, and idealized beauty standards. Therefore, social media can act as a risk factor for inadequate eating behaviors and harm to mental health, representing a significant public health challenge.

One identified gap is the limited focus, in the analyzed studies, on the specific role of nutritionists in addressing the impacts of social media on adolescents' eating habits. This absence is noteworthy , given that this professional plays a fundamental role in food and nutrition education, promoting healthy food choices, and developing preventive strategies aimed at adolescents.

Although this review has made it possible to gather current scientific evidence on the influence of social media on the eating habits and body image of adolescents, some limitations should be considered. The final sample consisted of eight studies,

predominantly cross-sectional designs, which allow for the identification of associations between the variables investigated, but have limitations regarding the establishment of causal relationships. Furthermore, the fact that the studies were conducted in different sociocultural contexts, as well as the use of different instruments to assess the use of social media and its impacts on eating behavior and body image, may limit the direct comparison between the results and their generalization to the entire adolescent population.

In addition to limitations related to the included studies, this review also presents limitations inherent to the methodological process itself. The search was conducted exclusively in the PubMed and SciELO databases, considering articles published between 2022 and 2026, which may have restricted the inclusion of relevant research indexed in other databases or published in different periods. Even so, the adoption of rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria, coupled with the convergence of the results found, strengthens the consistency of the evidence presented and lends greater reliability to the conclusions of this review.

This review contributes to the scientific literature by gathering and critically analyzing recent evidence on the influence of social media on the eating habits and body image of adolescents, highlighting the need to expand research on this topic, especially in the Brazilian context. In the field of public health, the results presented can support the planning of food and nutrition education strategies, health promotion actions in the school environment, programs to encourage the critical use of social media, and public policies aimed at preventing eating disorders and obesity among adolescents. Furthermore, they reinforce the importance of integrated action among nutritionists, educators, health professionals, managers, and families in building environments that favor healthy food choices and the development of a more critical and balanced relationship with digital content.

The findings of this review contribute to a broader understanding of the influence of social media on the eating habits and body image of adolescents, and may support future research, especially longitudinal and intervention studies that allow for a deeper understanding of the causal relationships between social media use and eating behaviors. Furthermore, the synthesized evidence can support the development of interdisciplinary actions, food and nutrition education strategies, media literacy initiatives, and public policies aimed at promoting health and preventing eating disorders and overweight in adolescence.

Therefore, understanding the influence of social media on adolescents' eating habits represents not only a scientific challenge, but also a priority for contemporary public health, requiring integrated actions between health professionals, families, schools, and public administrators to promote the conscious use of social media, strengthen adolescents' critical thinking, and encourage healthy eating habits.

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