



# Impact of social media interventions on eating behaviours in young people: a mixed-method systematic review

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# Introduction

- Diet is a **targetable** contributor to adolescent health, weight & wellbeing.
- Globally there are 4.9 billion social media users: 60% aged 13-35 y. In the UK, 97% of 16-24 olds engage weekly.
- 54% of youth seek health advice on social media, yet face misinformation, unrealistic body standards & unhealthy food promotion/advertisements.
- Social media provides potential for scalable and accessible promotion of healthier diets/eating behaviours.
- Need for a review to capture current trends, qualitive user experiences and the mechanisms of how interventions work (or don't).



# Methods

To assess the impact of social media interventions on healthy eating in young people (13-35 years) by:
[1] synthesizing quantitative effects & behaviour change techniques employed [2] exploring participants' qualitative experiences.

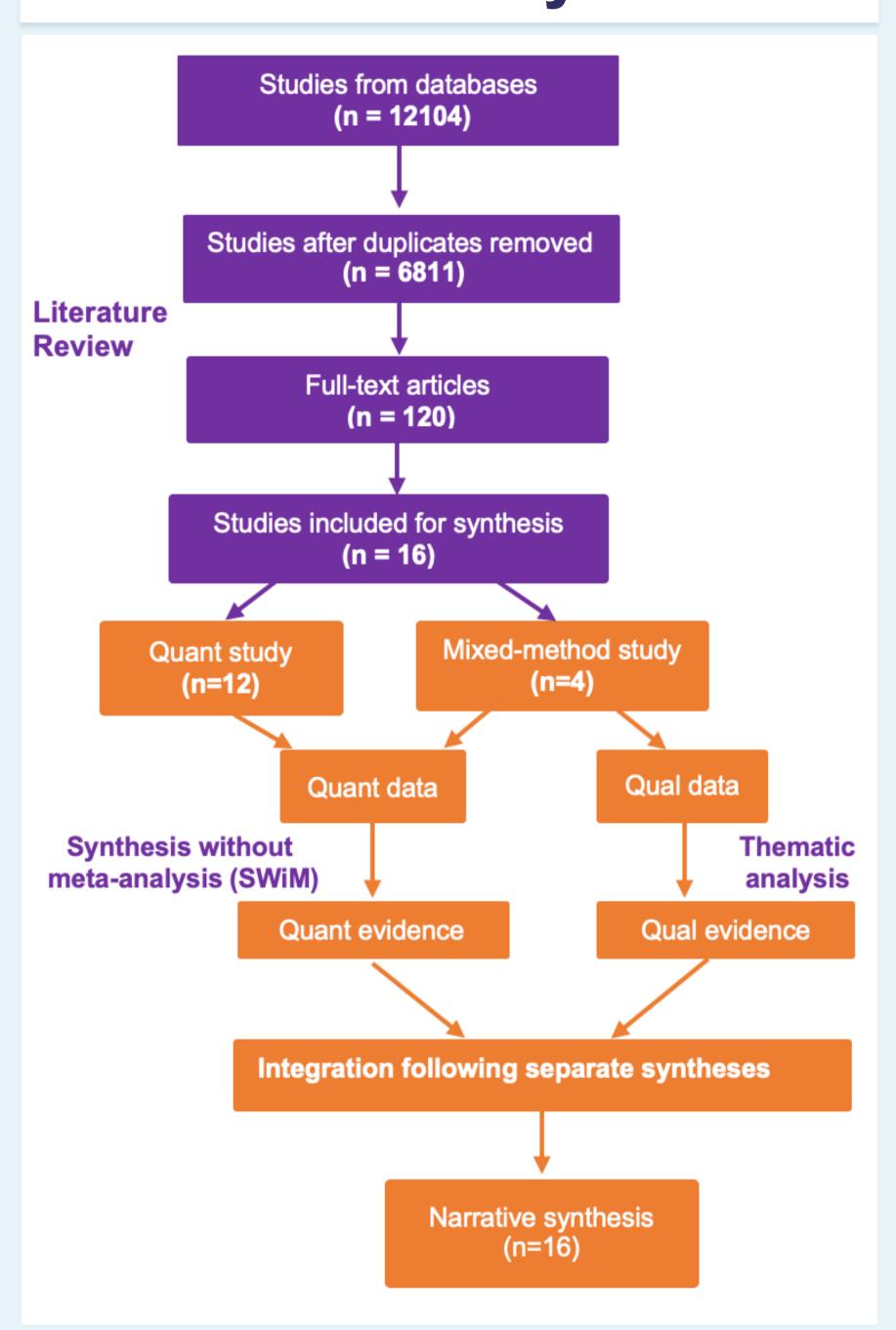
# Aim

- Systematic review of quantitative and qualitive studies (interventions & observational)
- Search date: 2/3/2023
- Databases: ASSIA, Cochrane Library, Embase, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, Scopus, Web of Science
- Analysis: Convergent segregated approach.
- Eligibility: Year 2000 onwards
- Registration: PROSPERO CRD42023414476



Scan ↑ for the protocol

# **Data Analysis**



# Results

# **Qualitative Findings**

#### **Content Appreciation**

Participants favour personal narratives, evidence-based dietary information, and practical tips.

"I think that there's a lot of value in taking people's stories, lived experiences, and sharing it with others because I find...It **brings connection and community** within these silos we have and just makes us know that we're not alone in our struggles"

#### **User Preferences**

- Type 1 user: Values storytelling & strong community connection.
- Type 2 user: Actively seeks practical & evidence-based dietary guidance.
- Both highlight the want for localized content & culturally-tailored interventions.

#### Feedback & Themes

• Content that underscores well-being, mental health & realistic dietary tips is valued.

"It's nice to see a focus more on "wellbeing" and "healthy bodies", rather than "skinny" and "losing weight".

"I'm more likely to remember the funny posts."

- Humour enhances engagement & content recall.
- Credibility of intervention tied to trust in the source.
- Signposting to reputable sources appreciated.



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# **Quantitative Findings**

- 19 interventions (n=16 studies)
- Study Design: Quasi-experimental (n=11), RCT (n=6), Observational (n=2)
- Location: (n=8), (n=4)
- Target Pop: Undergraduates (18-22 y; n=2390 total)
- Intervention Duration: Ave 12.8 weeks, most <10 weeks (n=11); longest at 12 months
- Intervention Target: Healthy eating (n= 12), Weight gain prevention (n= 5)
- Effectiveness: Positive impact (n=12), No impact (n=7)
- Frameworks: Social Cognitive Theory (n=2), Social Ecological Model (n=2), 'Not reported' (n=8)
- Behaviour Change Techniques: 'Information about health consequences' (n=13), 'Feedback on behaviours' (n=9), 'Goal setting' (n=8)

### Conclusions

- Social media is a promising tool to shape young people's eating behaviours → Tailored, local content is key.
- Previous interventions show significant positive change to diet

#### → potential ↑ effectiveness using behaviour change techniques

- Aligning content & delivery mode with audience preferences is vital
- Emphasising well-being & mental health resonates deeply with the target audience.