

Institutionen för kost- och idrottsvetenskap

Food, body weight, and health among adolescents in the digital age

An explorative study from a health promotion perspective

av

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Abstract

Title: Food, body weight, and health among adolescents in the digital age:
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The overall aim of this thesis was to explore adolescents' relationship with food, body weight, and health communication in online digital media, as well as how adolescents experience participating in a health promotion intervention regarding food and physical activity habits. Health promotion as a research area served three purposes: to inform the research questions, to direct the data collection, and to identify implications from the research findings. The four included studies explored how adolescents portray food in a widely used image-sharing application, why and how adolescents in treatment for obesity engaged with online health-related information, and how these adolescents experienced presenting themselves on social media. The fourth study explored adolescents' experiences of participating in a health-promoting intervention, focusing on their experiences of using a social media group within the intervention. Overall, the findings suggest that food is a significant means of adolescents' online self-presentation practices. Food imagery was most often communicated in a positive way, associated with commercial elements, and often depicting high-calorie foods. Adolescents with obesity experienced this user-generated food content as challenging for their weight management. These findings also question the separation between media and information content as stated in the original definition of eHealth literacy. The findings also emphasize a need to explore the adolescents' own experiences of acceptability of using social media in health promotion practices, with regards to the type of social media and in what context it was or could be used.