

# Eating disorders and Body Image within the Gay Male Internet Community

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## Research Question

How do comments on YouTube videos posted by gay men reflect and resist ideas about the relationship between body image, eating disorders, and body discrimination?

## Literature Review

Within the gay, male community:

- Stereotypes are entangled with actual dating ideals (Gordon et al. 2019, S43)
  - Many strive for "perfect" body
- Some have intense desire to be more muscular or lean ("Eating Disorders in Marginalized Communities" 2019)
- There are high levels of negative body image (Wood, 2008, 46-47)
  - Victims of male gaze
  - Objectified by men
  - Emphasis on physical appearance

## Methods

- Used discourse analysis to examine the viewer comments made in response to the videos of three gay male Youtubers
- The videos were found using the search terms "gay male body image"

## Findings and Discussion

Frequency of types of phrases:

- Compliments – 125
- Perfect Body – 92
- Body Image – 36
- Relatable – 33
- Fat/Need to exercise – 33
- Denial of problem – 29
- Discrimination – 26



Comments reflect:

- Mostly positive space for gay men to discuss body pressures within gay community
- Many feel need to have "perfect" body to be attractive in gay community
- Resistance that there is an issue
  - Gay men should want to "look good"

## Conclusions and Implications

The data reflect other studies' findings that many gay men feel pressure to obtain lean, muscular bodies in hopes for the "perfect" body, causing poor body image ("Eating Disorders in Marginalized Communities" 2019)

The tendency for the comments to dismiss the negative consequences of body pressures may be explained by the presence of tensions within the gay community if body discrimination is the cause of poor body image and eating disorders

However, it is important to recognize that negative body image is associated with developing an eating disorder ("Body Image & Eating Disorders." 2018)

## Contact Information

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## Works cited

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