



06 DEC, 2019

## Selfie surgery alarm

Herald Sun, Melbourne

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## Social media dysmorphia strikes teens

### SUSIE O'BRIEN

SNAPCHAT dysmorphia is making teenagers consider plastic surgery in a bid to look like their filtered social media selfies, a new study shows.

Researchers at Monash University found boys and girls as young as 16 are wanting to get nose jobs, hair transplants and other procedures so their appearance matches their doctored online images.

Gemma Sharp and her colleagues Brady Robards and Claire Moran conducted interviews with 34 boys and girls aged 16 to 18 to gain an understanding of selfie-taking practices in young people.

Lead author Dr Sharp said: "Changing your appearance so easily through photo filters at a young age provides an unrealistic sense that such changes can be easily achieved in real life. Using filters also reconfirms that their natural appearance isn't good enough."

She said the most profound influence was Snapchat and Instagram.

"There are a wide range of filters used to remove blemishes, minimise bags under eyes, slim down noses ... There's no end to the changes."

Survey participant "Alice", 18, said she was "interested" in getting a nose job after "just seeing a side profile of my face". "Joey", 16, said that in a couple of his photos he felt "as

though my hairline goes back a bit and I want to bring it forward a bit (through a hair transplant)".

Dr Sharp said this was "the effect of Snapchat dysmorphia — it makes people want to look like their filtered selfies". The research will be presented at the Swinburne University Body Image and Related

Disorders Conference today. Other research from Flinders University, released this week, shows children as young as 12 and 13 are engaging in disordered eating as a result of their social media use.

Dr Simon Wilksch and his team studied 996 children and found 51 per cent of the girls and 45 per cent of the boys

were adhering to strict exercise regimes and skipping meals.

Those who had the highest Snapchat and Instagram use had more thoughts and behaviours about disordered eating.

Interested 13 to 25-year-olds can confidentially register for a further study by emailing [mediasmart@flinders.edu.au](mailto:mediasmart@flinders.edu.au)

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**Maddie and Lucy, both 14, enjoy taking selfies, but have no interest in getting surgery. Picture: TONY GOUGH**