The Effect of Intensity Use of Social Media on Body Image Dissatisfaction in Early Adult Women

Fadhilah Aprilia Lukman¹, Ismarli Muis², Andi Nasrawati Hamid³
Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Negeri Makassar¹,²,³

Abstract. Social media plays a significant role in dissatisfaction with one’s body image, primarily attributed to the proliferation of digital communication tools. Excessive engagement with social media platforms could contribute to a negative perception of one’s body image and subtly impact an individual’s perception of beauty ideals. This can be observed by sharing photos that strictly adhere to societal standards of flawlessness and perfection. This study examined the intensity of social media use on body image dissatisfaction in early adult women. This research focused on early adult women aged 18-25 in Indonesia. Data was collected from 304 women using the Social Networking Time Use Scale (SONTUS) and the Body Image Dissatisfaction Scale (BID Scale). Five aspects of social media intensity were analyzed to determine their impact on five dimensions of body image dissatisfaction. The result of regression analysis showed that the social media use intensity positively affects body image dissatisfaction. Active users of social media would develop body image dissatisfaction. This study suggests that the more frequently young women use social media, the more dissatisfied they become with their body image. Furthermore, this study proposes a new contribution to this field through the results of correlation analysis between all aspects of two variables. The findings indicate that the intensity of social media use influences all dimensions of body image dissatisfaction, including appearance evaluation, appearance orientation, body area satisfaction, overweight preoccupation, and self-classified weight (p<0.01).

Keywords: body image dissatisfaction; early adult women; social media use intensity.

INTRODUCTION

Body image is deemed necessary for young adult women since they prioritize their appearance to increase self-confidence and self-esteem. This aligns with Grabe et al. (2008), suggesting that body image plays a crucial role as it has the potential to impact a person’s psychology through its perceived importance, particularly among women. According to Khotmanisah (2017), a person’s physical attractiveness is a significant indicator of social acceptance and self-esteem. On top of that, an individual’s self-esteem will increase as body image positivity increases.

Body image is commonly perceived differently according to local cultural standards. Based on the findings of Widodo and Ambarini (2021), the ideal body type in Indonesian society is the slim type. Wati and Sumarmi (2017) indicated that an individual’s dissatisfaction with their body image
might cause them to interpret their body negatively and undesirably. This will lead to other mental health problems, including insecurity. Young women will change their eating habits and other possible dieting routines to achieve the beauty standard body type. This will naturally make them more prone to stress and depression, which can cause various health issues.

Toselli et al. (2016) define body image perception as a psychosocial factor influencing weight status. As a result of a misunderstanding, slim individuals may overestimate their weight, and many overweight or obese individuals are oblivious that their weight is excessive. Furthermore, Zhang (2013) construed body image as the mental picture people build of themselves. In such circumstances, along with cases of dissatisfaction with one’s body image, weight-related behaviors are frequently associated. Body image perception and body shape predilection are determined by culture due to the influence of sociocultural influences on the criteria of optimal body weight among cultures. Geiger et al. (2014) also emphasized that body image is part of social perception and evaluation.

Hofstede explained that the cultural dimension of “Masculinity vs. Femininity” significantly shapes societal values and expectations related to gender roles and attributes (Satam & Wisam, 2019). In cultures leaning towards “Masculinity,” there is a strong emphasis on traditional male qualities, including success, assertiveness, and competitiveness. Conversely, in cultures characterized by “Femininity,” the emphasis shifts towards qualities like empathy, quality of life, and nurturing. In these cultures, there is often greater acceptance of diverse body types and less rigid beauty standards, reducing pressure on women to meet unrealistic appearance-related expectations. Consequently, women in these cultures may experience lower levels of body image dissatisfaction.

Several studies show that one’s perception of one’s body plays a crucial role in overall self-esteem and mental well-being throughout life (Hutchinson & Cassidy, 2022; Walters et al., 2023). Javaid and Ajmal (2019) observed a favorable correlation between the degree of body image confidence in males and their self-esteem. Additionally, the research revealed that older adolescent females exhibited higher self-esteem levels when contrasted with their younger counterparts in the early stages of adolescence. Moreover, it seems that mental health, self-esteem, and body contentment are interconnected aspects that are intricately linked and can be influenced by various life events (Hutchinson & Cassidy, 2022). Hargreaves & Tiggemann (2006) also add that body image refers to a person’s ideas and feelings around their physical appearance and body. On the other hand, assessing one’s body image pertains to how satisfied or dissatisfied an individual is with their physical appearance and form. Furthermore, on both dimensions of body image, there are reliable gender disparities.

In contemporary society, women often interpret the psychoanalytic concept of body image as a means to express their sentiments about their physical appearance concerning others (Griffin, 2012). Another term, ‘body schema,’ which still primarily resides within philosophical discourse, offers a more comprehensive explanation of how we develop our awareness of our bodies in action and in perceiving the world that surrounds us. Other terms, such as body ego, body schema, body idea, and body perception, have been used interchangeably with body image. Body image is the inner depiction of a person’s body in static and dynamic states. It comprises both emotional and mental elements, encompassing the observation and comprehension of the body and the way it is encountered and sensed. It contains both rational and illogical elements. There are conscious and unconscious parts, as well as automatic and deliberate bodily motions and reactions. There are holistic and distinguished elements of the body, i.e., the body exists both as a whole and as a collection of distinct pieces. The connection between body parts and the body is articulated.

Alterations in body image accompany development. In addition, it can transform at any
any time based on psychological, physiological, and sociological variables. The body image is, nevertheless, relatively stable. Under times of stress, the body image might regress to a foregone stage of advancement. There can also be fixations, arrests, and body image distortions during the developmental process. The individual’s body image evolves in response to many internal and external influences that interact.

The present study included the Self-Classified Weight subscales, Overweight Preoccupation, Body Areas Satisfaction, Appearance Orientation, and Appearance Evaluation of the BID Scale (Rothblum et al. 2002). The five body image subscales can classify people into satisfied and dissatisfied groups. Body image dissatisfaction arises because of a perceived difference between one’s physical appearance and the societal ideal for the body (Rothblum et al. 2002). Individuals who are discontent with their physical appearance or body image are at a higher risk of experiencing mental health issues. Investigating body image dissatisfaction is of paramount importance for several compelling reasons. Kim (2009) stated that body image dissatisfaction could cause suicidal tendencies. This alone underscores the urgency of addressing this concern. These people may suffer from depression from body dissatisfaction, causing them to commit suicide (Utami & Hadi, 2019). Through research in this field, it becomes possible to identify risk factors, triggers, and effective interventions, ultimately enabling preventative measures to be put in place. Moreover, such investigations are pivotal in promoting positive body image, fostering a society where individuals are comfortable with their bodies, regardless of societal beauty standards.

As a preliminary study, we distributed online questionnaires to 54 respondents, consisting of 43 females and 11 males. The result revealed that 59.25% of respondents were dissatisfied with their body image due to society’s judgments. It is distressing to witness the pervasive dissatisfaction with one’s current body image that affects a significant portion of the population. They perceived their body as unfitting to the body ideals in real life or on social media appearances. Meanwhile, 40.75% of respondents were satisfied with their bodies due to their self-judgment of reaching the ideal beauty standard. Women are susceptible to body image dissatisfaction due to their heavy concern for appearance. Quittkat et al. (2019) supported this idea, stating that females generally experience more significant emotional turmoil concerning their bodily form or appearance. (Maulani, 2019) revealed that 46% of female respondents were dissatisfied with their body shape, leading them to want a change in their body image. In addition, another study stated that people dissatisfied with their body image also undergo anxiety and depression (Duchesne et al., 2017). These findings emphasize the pressing need to address the widespread issue of body image dissatisfaction and its complex relationship with societal and personal judgments.

Some studies show that social media contributes greatly to body image dissatisfaction (Baminiwatta et al., 2021; Charmaraman et al., 2021; Turner & Ray, 2023). This is due to the rise in digital communication technologies (Mulawarman & Nurfitri, 2017). Within the context of social media usage and its impact on body image dissatisfaction, this study explores five distinct social media dimensions (Reyes et al., 2022). These dimensions encompass "Relaxing and Free Periods," "Academic-Related Periods," "Public-Places-Related Use," "Stress-Related Periods," and "Motives for Use." These dimensions delve into how individual’s body image perceptions are influenced by various life contexts and behaviors, particularly in their engagement with social media. Intense social media use increases body image dissatisfaction because it affects young adult’s mental health (Andini, 2020).

The preliminary survey showed that 26 of 43 females experienced body image dissatisfaction. Among 26 females, 92% (24 respondents) stated that social media causes body image dissatisfaction. Because social media gives fascinating information, including a woman’s perfect appearance.
standard, people would compare themselves on social media. In addition, Wallis and Kozar (2015) found that people with high social media usage tend to compare themselves to celebrities and peers.

High-intensity social media use might promote body image dissatisfaction and indirectly influence a person’s beauty standard. It can be manifested by posting pictures limited to only those deemed ideal and flawless by society (Reategui & Palmer, 2017). The portrayal of a perfect physical image on social media makes people crave unrealistic beauty standards. Individuals who cannot meet these social media’s beauty standards may experience body dissatisfaction, leading to despair, anxiety, and even destructive addiction (Reategui & Palmer, 2017). Based on these explanations, this study intends to analyze the effect of social media use intensity on body image dissatisfaction in early adult women.

**METHOD**

Participants of this research were 304 women. The population selected were women aged 18-25 who use social media activity more than four times a day and more than 3 hours a day. This research adopted the incidental sampling technique because the number of the early adult women in Indonesia is uncertain (Hadi, 2004).

This research consists of two variables: the independent variable, which is social media use intensity, comprising five aspects relaxing and free periods, academic-related periods, public-places-related use, stress-related periods, and motives for use; and the dependent variable, which is body image dissatisfaction, comprising five aspects as well - appearance evaluation, appearance orientation, body areas satisfaction, overweight preoccupation, and self-classified weight. While this study primarily focuses on two variables, further analysis examines the interactions between each of these aspects, resulting in a total of 25 analytical relationships.

This research used a quantitative method. In this study, the intensity of social media use was measured using the Social Networking Time Use Scale (SONTUS), which follows the multidimensional scale proposed by Olufadi (2016). In addition, body image dissatisfaction was measured through the multidimensional Body Image Dissatisfaction Scale (BID Scale) proposed by Cash (1990). The Sontus and Bid Scale are considered multidimensional because they encompass multiple aspects or constructs within the broader domains they are designed to measure (Olufadi, 2016; Cash 1990). Because these scales are multidimensional, each aspect or construct can be considered a variable.

SONTUS uses factors of scale, which consist of (1) relaxing and free periods, (2) academic-related periods, (3) public-places-related use, (4) stress-related periods, and (5) motives for use. As indicated by Olufadi (2016), the reliability values for these five aspects, totaling 29 items, all surpassing the threshold of 0.6, are presented as follows. The first aspect, ”relaxing and free periods,” demonstrates alpha values ranging from 0.67 to 0.82 for its nine constituent items. The second aspect (six items), ”academic-related periods,” exhibits alpha values within the range of 0.69 to 0.86, highlighting the scale’s reliability. The third aspect (five items), ”public-places-related use,” maintains alpha values spanning from 0.73 to 0.84, reinforcing the trustworthiness of the measurement. In the fourth aspect (five items), ”stress-related periods,” alpha values fall between 0.70 and 0.77, attesting to the scale’s consistency. Lastly, the fifth aspect (four items), with alpha values spanning from 0.67 to 0.82, underlines the stability of measurement. These reliability values underscore the robustness of the assessment across the diverse aspects, ensuring the consistency and accuracy of the data collected in the study. We employed an eleven-point scale on the social media intensity use scale (Dawes, 2002).
Meanwhile, body image dissatisfaction was measured using the BID Scale. Factors on this scale include (1) appearance evaluation, (2) appearance orientation, (3) body area satisfaction, (4) overweight, and (5) self-classified weight. On this scale, we used a Likert scale with five response options comprising Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The reliability testing of items was conducted by Cash (1990), which was divided into four categories: male group, female group, and male and female groups combined after one month, summarized for each aspect as follows with the lowest alpha values taken. For the aspect of "appearance evaluation," the alpha value was 0.81. "Appearance orientation" had an alpha value of 0.85. "Body areas satisfaction" demonstrated an alpha value of 0.73, as did the "overweight preoccupation" aspect. The aspect of "self-classified weight" yielded an alpha value of 0.70.

We examined the content validity of V Aikens in the range of 1 to 5 to test the validity of the item scores based on the content validity of the Sontus and Bid Scale. The factorial validity of the scales was assessed using the JASP application with 100 participants, consisting of 29 items for Sontus and 34 items for the Bid Scale. All items were used for further analysis since the loading factors ranged from 0.322 to 0.972.

Furthermore, this study performed an item-total correlation analysis using SPSS. The item-total correlation assessment for measuring the intensity of social media use ranged from 0.371 to 0.600. Moreover, the body image dissatisfaction item scale ranged from 0.208 to 0.601.

In addition, the reliability estimation used Cronbach’s alpha reliability analysis on item scores with the SPSS. The outcomes of assessing the reliability of the body image dissatisfaction scale, consisting of 34 items, displayed an impressive Cronbach’s alpha score of 0.824. This falls into the excellent range. Similarly, the evaluation of the reliability of the social media intensity use scale, comprising 29 items, resulted in a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.917, which is classified as very good.

This study used a simple regression analysis using SPSS to test the hypotheses. Regression analysis was begun with the assumption test, including the normality test. It yielded a Kolmogorov-Smirnov value of 0.200 (p>0.05), indicating normal data. Then, the linearity test yielded a 0.000 (p>0.05), indicating that the generated data were linear.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The hypothesis testing was carried out using regression analysis. This analysis determines how an independent variable influences the interval data of the dependent variable. Table 1 demonstrates that the coefficient of determination ($R^2$) is 0.215 with a significance value of 0.000 (p<0.01). Social media use intensity has a significant influence on body image dissatisfaction. Therefore, the hypothesis in this study is accepted.

Moreover, an additional examination was conducted to explore how five different aspects of social media usage intensity impact various facets of body image dissatisfaction. The following results provided the observed influence of each aspect of social media intensity on body image dissatisfaction dimensions.

Relating to the value of $R^2$ reaching 1.96 or 19.6%, the factor of public-places-related use significantly influences the variable of body image dissatisfaction. In this regard, individuals would highly use social media in the public sphere (Table 1). On the other hand, with an $R^2$ value reaching 0.038 or 3.8%, the factor of stress-related periods has a minor influence on the body image dissatisfaction variable. People will rarely use social media when stressed or encountering difficulties.
Table 1.
Aspects of Social Media Intensity Use Towards Body Image Dissatisfaction (p<0.01)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Intensity</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.215</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxing and Free Periods</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.189</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic-Related Periods</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.171</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public-Places-Related Use</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.196</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress-Related Periods</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>0.001**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motives for Use</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.145</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, table 2 displays the analysis results for each aspect of social media intensity influencing various elements of body image dissatisfaction. The p-values are below the significance level of .01, except for the influence of stress-related use on body area satisfaction (BAS). The impact of each aspect of social media intensity on each aspect of body image dissatisfaction is indicated by the R² values.

Firstly, the aspect of body image dissatisfaction, appearance evaluation (AE), is most strongly influenced by academic-related periods at 49.5%. Appearance orientation (AO) is most significantly influenced by public-places-related use at 9.3%. Body area satisfaction (BAS) is most affected by academic-related periods at 19.1%. Overweight preoccupation (OP) is predominantly influenced by public-places-related use at 41.3%. Meanwhile, self-classified weight (SCW) is primarily affected by motives for use. The results indicate that the most influential aspects of social media intensity are academic-related periods, public-places-related use, and motives for use.

Table 2.
Aspects of Social Media Intensity Use Towards Aspects of Body Image Dissatisfaction (p<0.01)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>AE R²</th>
<th>AE p</th>
<th>AO R²</th>
<th>AO p</th>
<th>BAS R²</th>
<th>BAS p</th>
<th>OP R²</th>
<th>OP p</th>
<th>SCW R²</th>
<th>SCW p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relaxing and Free Periods</td>
<td>0.399</td>
<td>0.002**</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>0.110</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>0.294</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>0.459</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic-Related Periods</td>
<td>0.495</td>
<td>0.002**</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>0.191</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>0.250</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>0.262</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public-Places-Related Use</td>
<td>0.384</td>
<td>0.003**</td>
<td>0.093</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>0.413</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>0.310</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress-Related Use</td>
<td>0.165</td>
<td>0.006**</td>
<td>0.030</td>
<td>0.003**</td>
<td>0.016</td>
<td>0.029**</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>0.156</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motives for Use</td>
<td>0.261</td>
<td>0.004**</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>0.177</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
<td>0.508</td>
<td>0.000**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The phenomenon in question involves the significant influence of social media intensity on various elements of body image dissatisfaction. Firstly, academic-related periods, such as exam seasons or times of heightened academic stress, have a substantial impact on body image dissatisfaction. This suggests that during these periods, individuals may experience heightened dissatisfaction with their bodies due to the influence of social media, possibly due to increased stress and comparison with others. Secondly, the phenomenon indicates that using social media in public places or during Social interactions contributes to increased body image dissatisfaction. Comparing oneself to others on social media platforms in public settings can lead to a more pronounced sense of dissatisfaction with one’s body. Lastly, the reasons behind using social media, referred to as motives...
for use, are also influential. Different motivations, such as seeking validation, engaging in comparisons, or pursuing specific beauty standards, can result in varying levels of body image dissatisfaction.

This study found that the intensity of social media use positively affects body image dissatisfaction. It is aligned with a study by Walker et al. (2019) on 118 women in the UK and USA, demonstrating a positive correlation between social media use and body image dissatisfaction. In other words, social media users will experience increased body image dissatisfaction. Maimunah and Satwika (2021) stated that while using social media, women prefer to compare their bodies to those they see on social media. When there is a discrepancy between the two, women might experience body image dissatisfaction. Additionally, Elita et al. (2017) noted that early adulthood is the age at which women frequently face emotional instability. Moreover, compared to men, women are more dynamic, sensitive, and susceptible to jealousy on social media Handikasari et al. (2018).

Based on the results, social media use intensity affects body image dissatisfaction by 21.5%, whereas other factors influence 78.5%. According to research by Tiggemann and Barbato (2018), social media does not always affect body image dissatisfaction. Social comparison is one of the elements that can affect body image dissatisfaction. Social comparison will further exacerbate the apparent disparity between early adult women and older women (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016). Therefore, a significant relationship exists between social media intensity and body image dissatisfaction. Social media use can increase dissatisfaction with one’s physical appearance. This study also reveals that, of all social media usage factors, Public-Places-Related Use has the most significant impact on body image dissatisfaction, having a 19.6% effect. In this context, people will use social media more frequently in public areas.

Furthermore, this research has analyzed the influence of each aspect of social media intensity on each dimension of body image dissatisfaction. The relaxing and free period aspect significantly impacts self-classified weight, overweight preoccupation, body area satisfaction, and appearance orientation while having no impact on appearance evaluation (not significant with a value of 0.399). This suggests that when individuals access social media while relaxing or resting, they tend to evaluate their weight subjectively.

The most substantial influence of social media use intensity on academic-related periods on body image dissatisfaction is self-classified weight, while appearance orientation is the lowest factor. This indicates that individuals who access social media during the learning process tend to compare themselves from both their perspectives and others.

The most significant effect of the social media intensity on public-places-related use towards body image dissatisfaction is an overweight preoccupation, while the lowest factor is appearance orientation. This suggests that people who use social media in public or while in a meeting are more likely to be concerned about changes in their weight.

The influence of the stress-related use aspect on self-classified weight on body image dissatisfaction is the most significant, while the aspect of appearance orientation is the lowest influence. This indicates that individuals who access social media when experiencing difficulties or have recently experienced stress tend to judge their weight from a personal and an external perspective.

Regarding motives for use, self-classified weight is the most affected, while the appearance orientation is the lowest. This indicates that individuals who access social media when they want to interact with others tend to judge their weight from a personal point of view and others.

The analysis of social media intensity use on body image dissatisfaction indicated that self-classified weight and overweight preoccupation are the characteristics most influenced by social media use intensity. Regarding self-classified weight, individuals tend to classify themselves
according to their weight based on what they observe on social media and their evaluations. Overweight obsession, is related to an individual’s fear of being overweight, so they attempt to reduce weight based on ideal beauty standards (Maimunah & Satwika, 2021).

Furthermore, appearance orientation and body area satisfaction are the components of body image dissatisfaction least influenced by social media use intensity. This result contradicts the findings by Marizka et al. (2019), who argued that social media can enhance individuals’ tendency to compare their looks to other social media users. Individuals are typically satisfied with a single body area on body image satisfaction.

There are still pros and cons surrounding the effect of social media use on body image dissatisfaction, so further research should be conducted in the future. Andini (2020) stated that having access to social media, mainly posting individual photos on them, can affect an individual to compare themselves to other social media users. This comparing attitude will gradually make the individual feel dissatisfied with oneself. Thus, it can harm the early adulthood phase of an individual’s personality growth. In addition, recent research has shown that the intensity of social media use significantly affects the rise of body dissatisfaction in a person Marizka et al. (2019), where this activity dominates their daily life. According to Yurdagül et al. (2021), an individual’s addiction to open social media will rise when this condition happens. Social media will become one of the essential things that individuals must check daily. Moreover, satisfaction will come after opening social media. This happens when social media control an individual’s daily activities, resulting in a more extended period of use than before.

Acknowledging the constraints of this research is crucial. The sole aim of this study is to examine how the extent of social media utilization impacts dissatisfaction with body image among young adult women in Indonesia. Therefore, the same result may not be obtained outside Indonesia. Furthermore, some exposures will give additional factors affecting body image dissatisfaction, although they were not assessed in this study. Further researchers interested in body image dissatisfaction may study the effect of specified social media and consider other factors that are not measured in this study.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the level of social media engagement impacts the dissatisfaction with body image in young adult women. This means that as the amount of time spent on social media increases, so does the likelihood of feeling unhappy with one’s body image. Active users of social media would develop dissatisfaction with their body image. The aspect of public-places-related use has the most significant influence on the body image dissatisfaction variable. Furthermore, this research suggests that increased usage of social media is associated with greater dissatisfaction with body image among young adult women. This connection arises from the heightened level of social media engagement contributing to a negative perception of their bodies.

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