

Undergraduate Thesis

Optimization of the Production of Lofexidine (Technical Topic)

Instagram's Effect on self-objectification and body image issues among young women (STS Topic)

By

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On my honor as a University student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment as defined by the Honor Guidelines for Thesis-Related Assignments.

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Sociotechnical Synthesis

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, approximately 2.1 million people in the United States abuse opioids. Opioid addiction has become an increasing epidemic in the United States with the death rate rising significantly. The number of opioid deaths is projected to increase from 33,100 in 2015 to 81,700 by 2025, a 147% increase (Chen et al., 2019). In October of 2017, the United States Department of Health and Human Services declared the opioid crisis a national public health emergency. Currently, popular medications prescribed to treat opioid addiction are actually opioids. The technical aspect of this prospectus focuses on the scaleup production of Lofexidine, a non-opioid medication that helps patients withdraw, and it was approved for use in the United States in 2018. Lofexidine contains a central alpha 2-adrenergic agonist, which decreases the release of norepinephrine. This reduces the neurochemical surge that produces withdrawal symptoms in opioid abusers. Since Lofexidine costs significantly more than other opioid withdrawal medications, uptake in the United States has not been significant. The technical project will analyze the production of Lofexidine in an industrial scale to gain insight in optimal operating conditions which result in cheaper manufacturing costs and lower Lofexidine pricing.

While the opioid crisis driving the technical project has significant human and social dimensions, the societal aspect of this undergraduate thesis transitions to examining the effect Instagram, a popular social media platform, has on self-objectification and body image issues in young women. Although social media allows users to express themselves and stay connected to their peers, this new social media era leads to constant internal comparison to other peoples' lives and appearances. This research addresses how a popular social media platform, Instagram, is creating self-objectification and body image issues among young women. Instagram, launched in 2012, is a free social media platform that allows users to post photos and videos for their followers to see. However, many Instagram posts are edited and filtered to create an unrealistic representation of the user's appearance. With Instagram being so prevalent among people under the age of 35, it is crucial to consider the social dimensions associated with this photo-based software. Young women in this age group are especially susceptible to the detrimental effects of comparing their physical appearance to the girls in the posts they see on Instagram. Considering many users check Instagram every day, in many cases multiple times a day, it is important to consider how this significant exposure is affecting the mental health of women in an

impressionable time of their lives. Instagram is a relatively new technology that has been adapted by social groups differently. Although all users are susceptible to body image issues from comparison to others, diverse groups of people from various social classes and social classes use and are affected by Instagram in the different ways which will be analyzed through the lens of Social Construction of Technology (SCOT). This study uses a survey, consisting of females between the ages of 18 and 22, to examine how their self confidence in their face and body changes after exposure to Instagram and then exposure to “Body Positive” images. Body Positive images relate to a new Instagram trend that aims to challenge the societal beauty ideals by displaying a wide range of body types. The survey asks the subjects to rate their confidence before any exposure and then again after. Results are expected to show a significant decrease in confidence for the women in both their face and body after Instagram exposure, but an increase in confidence after the body positive exposure. This research aims to bring awareness to the body image issues caused by Instagram in hope that users may limit their time spent on the app and evaluate the effects a potential answer with the body positive images. The creator of SCOT, Bijker, stated the importance of evolving the sociology of technology to better equip future generations to handle upcoming challenges. The sociology of Instagram must be evolved to prevent the continuation of self-objectification and body image issues in young women from this very popular social media platform.

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