

# The Thin Web Line. New technologies and promotion of unhealthy behaviors. Eating disorders and Pro-Ana(pro-anorexia) subculture. How to fight against them

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## Abstract.

**Introduction** The main goal of this research is to show the negative impact that content which promotes unhealthy behaviors may cause in adolescents around the world. These contents have found in the new technologies an effective means of disclosure such as sites, social networks, chatrooms, blog, apps, instant messaging etc.

More specifically, this research will focus on the relationship that may exist between the contents that promote pro-anorexic (pro-ana) and pro-bulimic (pro-mia) behaviors and the increased risk of developing an eating disorder.

Other questions, for instance, how can these sites affect the recovery of young people in therapeutic treatment? they also arise.

Finally, for the researchers, it is really important to try to involve the research community in all areas to undertake new research and initiatives in search of solutions to an unfortunately growing problem.

**Purpose** On the one hand, this research tries to show the proliferation and promotion of content that encourages eating-risk behaviors in adolescents and the growth of a social current and subculture that supports and promotes these contents on the other hand, it proposes initiatives that may help to better understand this phenomenon and what to do.

**Methodology** Firstly, regarding to the documentary methodology, the researchers have carried out extensive consultations, mainly in databases such as Medline and PsycINFO. Research articles have also been consulted using research communities, namely Researchgate and Scopus. Consultations to research projects ongoing as Anamia (research project started in 2010 and funded by The French Agence Nationale de la Recherche ANR) have been useful to collect data about the state of the art.

To know the economic and social reach of eating disorders in Europe, several research conducted by BEAT (beating eating disorders UK) and published by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) have been consulted.

Secondly, the researchers have developed a wide collection of content in different electronic forms, such as sites, chatrooms, blog, forums, newsletter, etc. To make this one, several tools have been used from the most popular search engines, for instance BING, Google or Startpage to scanning tools of the so-called deep Internet as TOR.

In addition to the above, different hashtags as collarbones, blackthinspo, binging have been audited on Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter and Flickr social networks using Hastracking tools, such as Keyhole.

Finally, we have also used two instant messaging apps called TapaTalk y Whatsaap. These applications were widely used within the community of the closed MPAOne / MPA1 site for pro-ana supporters.

**Results** A brief summary of the results would tell us that this study is not explicitly mentioned because it is important to note that because the authors do not explicitly point to it. out the presence of thinspiration that it was not abundantly present in the pro-ana sites. Thinspiration often took the form of photographs of models or actresses, some of which had been doctored to make them look even more emaciated.

Other forms of thinspiration included mantras such as "nothing tastes as good as thin feels." Similarly, Abbot Daga and colleagues (2006) mentioned the existence of chat rooms or support groups on the pro-ana sites under examination; yet simply because the authors do not make a point of identifying their existence, it does not mean that they did not find chat rooms on the sites at which they looked.

As an example, we present a brief analysis of the audit of the hashtag #proana using the Keyhole tool a real-time tracker:

Date: August 9<sup>th</sup> 2018

Time: 8:30 pm. GMT +1

Social Network: Twitter©

Hashtag: #proana

Posts

Users

*Localization: Central Europe*  
Engagement

Reach

Impressions

419	184	2,555	92,000	100,000
User(Nickname)	Posts	<i>Influencers</i>	Followers	Impressions
		Avg Eng		
Make way for the gay	1	74	272	272
S.A.D.	1	35	640	5,120

**Limitations and strengths of the study** We believe that the biggest limitation of research is in the continuous growth of the pro-ana community using new terms to refer to it, for example prettyKetty or 141. Researchers are sure that this study will have to be reviewed in a year at least. One of the values added in this research has been the use of really effective tools in data analysis and interpretation.

**Impact** Regarding to the different published studies we share the one published by Csipke and Horene. In Csipke and Horene's 2007 study, participants answered questionnaires about the impact of pro-ana sites. Twenty-six percent of participants said that websites offered them practical advice that helped them maintain disordered eating behaviors. Forty-three percent reported said that the site helped them in terms of emotional support. 2.6% responded they were receiving both practical tips in maintaining the disorder and emotional support. 19.2% said the websites

harmed them, leading the study to conclude that visiting the sites led to a trend of worsening body image.

**Practical and Social Value** An immediate practical social value is the disclosure and policing of harmful sites that promote the pro-ana lifestyle. This promotion will help the family to know more about the socialization of the disorder and the therapists to know the harmful tendencies. Although it seems a contradiction, through this promotion we believe it reduces the risk of young people willing to follow these communities also allowing a comparison between pro-ana lifestyles and healthier anti-ana lifestyles.

**Keywords:** Pro-ana, Pro-mia, Thinspiration, Thin, Thinspo, Anaymia, Collarbones, Blackthinspo, Binging, Thinthighs, Bikinibridges

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