



Release No. 50
Mexico City, October 12th, 2025

Social Media Influences the Development of Eating Disorders: IPN Researcher

- **The promotion of stereotypes based on false beauty standards negatively affects eating habits and psychological well-being, she stated**
- **Treating these disorders requires multidimensional, consistent work and patience; Cognitive Behavioral Therapy has proven effective when combined with family support, she added**

Ana María Balboa Verduzco, professor and researcher at the Instituto Politécnico Nacional (IPN), warned that in the digital era, the widespread use of social media has become a serious risk factor for the development of eating disorders among adolescents and young people. Through various platforms, distorted information and unattainable beauty standards are promoted, influencing eating habits and psychological well-being.

A specialist in Clinical and Health Psychology at the Escuela Superior de Medicina (ESM), Balboa Verduzco explained that changes in eating habits and a distorted perception of body image can lead to conditions such as depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, cognitive distortions, and low self-esteem, among others.

The relevance of addressing these issues aligns with the national health policy promoted by the President of Mexico, Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo, and the Secretary of Public Education, Mario Delgado Carrillo, which aims to strengthen preventive care and the comprehensive health of educational communities.

The researcher, who holds a master's degree in Behavioral Medicine, noted that eating disorders are recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) as mental and behavioral conditions characterized by a persistent fear of gaining weight and uncontrolled eating behaviors, affecting both women and men.

Balboa Verduzco stated that the application of various Cognitive Behavioral Therapy techniques has shown successful results in treating these conditions.



"Recovery requires consistency, patience, and an appropriate management of personal narrative that promotes positive thoughts about food, as well as the strengthening of self-concept and self-esteem," she emphasized.

She urged parents to identify early signs of these disorders by observing atypical behaviors —such as isolation, depression, sudden and constant weight loss, or frustration— and to encourage regular medical check-ups that include clinical analyses.

She explained that when the disorder is already present, comprehensive care is necessary, involving a multidisciplinary team of health professionals (psychologist, pediatrician, nutritionist, and child psychiatrist, in the case of minors), along with the active participation of the family. She also recommended maintaining a balanced diet based on vegetables and natural water, engaging in moderate physical activity, and spending time outdoors as a family to promote healthy and harmonious development.

Balboa Verduzco stressed that the origins of bulimia are multidimensional, and factors such as bullying related to childhood overweight can play a role in its onset. She reminded that constant exposure to distorted images and messages on social media significantly affects eating habits, psychological well-being, and emotional development in children and adolescents.

With over 30 years of experience in psychological intervention through Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, she warned that these disorders are particularly concerning since many users lack the maturity to recognize the confusion generated by extreme beauty standards spread through digital platforms, often through heavily filtered and unrealistic images.

She emphasized that this distorted environment can have severe consequences, promoting disordered eating, extreme diets, starvation, and excessive exercise, which may lead to neurological damage (such as slower speech), hormonal alterations (including the suspension of menstruation in young women), and cardiac, digestive, and dental problems —the latter caused by gastric acids following recurrent vomiting in cases of bulimia.

For more information, visit www.ipn.mx.