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Evaluating a school-based intervention to improve media literacy and reduce body dissatisfaction in Colombian adolescents

Submission date
03/08/2025

Recruitment status
Recruiting

Registration date
04/08/2025

Overall study status
Ongoing

Last Edited
23/01/2026

Condition category
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[X] Prospectively registered
[X] Protocol
[_] Statistical analysis plan
[_] Results
[_] Individual participant data
[X] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Many young people in Latin America, including Colombia, struggle with body dissatisfaction. Despite this, there are very few programs designed specifically for this region that have been tested and shown to work. This study is testing a 4-session classroom-based program aimed at helping adolescents feel better about their bodies by improving their understanding of how the media can influence appearance ideals. A small pilot study in Barranquilla (involving 300 students) showed that the program was both acceptable to students and potentially effective. We are now planning to assess the effectiveness of the intervention program with 1000 adolescents.

Who can participate?
Adolescents in grades 7 to 10 (11 to 17 years old) from urban and rural areas in Colombia

What does the study involve?
The study involves participating in a four-session intervention during school time where we talk about media, appearance pressures, comparisons and appearance comments. Before and after the sessions, we will give you some questionnaires to fill out about how you feel about your body, media literacy, appearance comparisons, general wellbeing, eating disorder symptoms, risky appearance-related behaviours and your attitudes about skin colour. These questionnaires will be collected at three different time points: before the program starts (baseline), 1 week after it ends (immediate post-test) and 9-12 months later (follow-up).

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
We expect participants to feel better about themselves and improve their media literacy skills. We do not expect any risks or negative consequences from participating in this study. However, if you do not feel comfortable talking about these topics, you can stop your participation at any time or choose not to answer certain questions.

When is the study starting and how long is it expeted to run for?
January 2025 to September 2028

Who is funding the study?
The study is funded by the UKRI Horizon Guarantee scheme grant

Who is the main contact?
Prof. Lynda Boothroyd, l.g.boothroyd@durham.ac.uk

Contact information

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Scientific, Principal investigator

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Study information

Scientific Title
Can a facilitator-delivered, group-based school intervention increase media literacy and decrease body dissatisfaction in adolescents? A cluster randomised controlled trial in Colombia

Acronym
BiRes

Study objectives
1. Evaluate whether participants randomised to receive the intervention ("soy como soy") show increased media literacy, decreased body dissatisfaction, and/or improvements in secondary outcomes at T2 and T3 compared to baseline, relative to participants randomised to the control group
2. Assess effects of moderators (SES, school type, location) on any observed changes in primary and secondary outcomes in response to the intervention

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
1. Approved 02/07/2024, Psychology Ethics Committee Durham University (South Road, Durham, DH1 3LE, United Kingdom; +44 (0)1913343240; psychology.ethics@durham.ac.uk), ref: PSYCH-2024-0327-1476

2. Approved 16/01/2025, Research Ethics Committee of the Health Sciences Division at Universidad del Norte (Km. 5 vía Puerto Colombia, Barranquilla, 15969, Colombia; +57 (0) 53509509; comite_eticauninorte@uninorte.edu.co), ref: 328

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Cluster randomized controlled trial

Study type(s)
Prevention

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Body dissatisfaction and media literacy in adolescents

Interventions
In this two-arm cluster randomized controlled superiority trial we will compare changes in primary and secondary outcomes in participating adolescents randomised to receive either the intervention or a wait-list control condition in a parallel group design over the first 9-12 months of the study. The group allocation ratio is 1:1, clustered by school and stratified by school location (urban/rural), socioeconomic position (high/low), and funding status (state/private).

The study involves participating in a four-session intervention during school time where we talk about media, appearance pressures, comparisons and appearance comments. Participants in the waitlist control group will receive the intervention after the follow-up.

Before and after the sessions, we will give you some questionnaires to fill out about how you feel about your body, media literacy, appearance comparisons, general wellbeing, eating disorder symptoms, risky appearance-related behaviours and your attitudes about skin colour. These questionnaires will be collected at three different time points: before the program starts (baseline), 1 week after it ends (immediate post-test) and 9-12 months later (follow-up).

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
1. Media literacy measured using the self-reported questionnaire Perceived Reality Scale-Social Media at baseline, immediate post-test and follow-up
2. Body dissatisfaction measured using the self-reported questionnaire Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults (BESAA) at baseline, immediate post-test and follow-up

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Comparison attitudes, measured using the self-reported questionnaire Multidimensional Physical Appearance Comparison Scale (M-PACS) at baseline, immediate post-test, and follow-up
2. Thin ideal internalization, measured using the self-reported questionnaire Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-4, thin internalization subscale (SATAQ-4) at baseline, immediate post-test, and follow-up
3. Curvy ideal internalization (girls only), measured at baseline, immediate post-test, and follow-up using the self-reported questionnaire Curvy Ideal Internalization scale (CII)
4. Drive for muscularity (boys only), measured using the self-reported questionnaire Drive for Muscularity Scale (DMS) at baseline, immediate post-test, and follow-up
5. Eating disorder symptoms, measured using the self-reported questionnaire Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire short version (EDE-QS) at baseline, immediate post-test, and follow-up
6. General wellbeing, measured using the self-reported questionnaire WHO-5 Well-Being Index for adolescents at baseline, immediate post-test, and follow-up

Exploratory outcomes:
1. Risky appearance-altering behaviours, measured using the self-reported questionnaire Risky Appearance Altering Behaviours Inventory (RAABI) at baseline, immediate post-test, and follow-up
2. Colourism attitudes, measured using the self-reported questionnaire Colorism Scale at baseline, immediate post-test, and follow-up
3. Skin colour satisfaction, measured using the self-reported item “How satisfied are you with your skin colour?” at baseline, immediate post-test, and follow-up

Completion date
01/09/2028

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Aged 11 – 17 years
2. Attending a participating school and class
3. Written parental consent
4. Give written assent before the start of the study

Participant type(s)
Learner/student

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Child

Lower age limit
11 Years

Upper age limit
17 Years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
0

Key exclusion criteria
1. Aged ≤11 or ≥17 years
2. Do not have written parental consent
3. Participants with mental health conditions (e.g., active eating disorders) are not excluded from the study; however, parents are explicitly advised to think carefully about whether consenting to their child's participation in the study is in their best interests in this situation and not to give consent if they have any concerns

Date of first enrolment
13/08/2025

Date of final enrolment
01/09/2027

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Colombia

Study participating centre
Universidad del Norte, Barranquilla
Área metropolitana de, Kilómetro 5, Vía Puerto Colombia
Barranquilla
Colombia
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Sponsor information

Organisation

Durham University

ROR
https://ror.org/01v29qb04

Funder(s)

Funder type
Government

Funder Name
UKRI Horizon Guarantee scheme grant

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
Anonymised datasets generated and analysed during the current study will be stored in a publicly available repository (Open Science Framework, osf.io)

IPD sharing plan summary
Stored in publicly available repository

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Protocol article		22/01/2026	23/01/2026	Yes	No