

Video Calling May Be Damaging to Mental Health

Younger women were particularly susceptible to developing long-term body image dissatisfaction fueled by videoconferencing.

September 9, 2021 By [Jeanette L. Pinnacle](#)

With the recent uptick in video calling, many people have experienced heightened concerns about their appearance and what others who see them will think. Recent study [findings published in the International Journal of Women's Dermatology](#) show that this has led to an increase in [stress](#) and [anxiety](#), with most individuals surveyed worried about their appearance, reports the [NYPost.com](#).

For the study, researchers posted a poll online that included questions about changes in people's self-perception and any anxiety linked with reengaging with others in person. (The survey was developed to focus on the possible mental health effects of videoconferencing, [social media](#) and the use of filters to improve one's appearance during video calls.) The survey netted a total of 7,295 responses nationwide from a cross-section of people ages 18 to older than 75.

Of participants who were resuming in-person activities, 70.6% revealed that they felt anxious or stressed out about doing so. In addition, almost 64% of respondents disclosed seeking [mental health](#) support services; nearly 30% of those surveyed said they planned to improve their looks due to anxiety about their appearance; and more than 30% committed to changing their appearance. The most common concerns cited included [weight gain](#) (37.1%); discolored or scarred [skin](#) (32.4%) and wrinkles (24.5%).

Scientists also noted that the pandemic-related rise in time spent on videoconferencing, social media use and the application of filters on these virtual communications platforms led to worsened [body image](#) and mental health, particularly among women ages 18 to 24.

"It seemed that at a time like that [the pandemic] other matters would be top of mind, but a lot of people were really concerned with feeling that they looked much worse than usual," dermatologist Arianne Shadi Kourosh, MD, MPH, one of the study's authors, told [Wired UK](#). "A lot of people are suffering from the negative mental health impacts quietly."

Researchers urged families to be aware that as teen and college-aged kids prepare to socialize in real life once again, their escalated use of social media and filters could boost anxiety.

“As we reenter a life of socializing, aesthetic physicians and the medical community at large should be aware of the effects of increased videoconferencing related to worsening mental health and self-perceptions in order to better serve our patients,” researchers concluded.

To learn more about body image and its mental health effects on women, read “[Social Media and Faking One’s Looks Online](#)” and “[Reflections of You.](#)”

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