

Objectified Body Consciousness Before and After COVID-19

Olivia Clune, Allison Kiefner-Burmeister, PhD

The University of Findlay



Background

- Objectified body consciousness is associated with disordered eating, negative self-beliefs, reason for exercise, and restrained eating (Faries & Espie, 2016).
- The more an individual monitors their body, the more likely they are to report a feeling of loneliness (Teng, Gao, Huang, & Poon, 2018).
- Social isolation can be detrimental to mental health which positively correlates with physical health and general well-being (Rohde, D'Ambrosio, Tang, & Rao, 2015).
- Individuals with previous mental health concerns were better adjusted to social isolation than those without preexisting mental health concerns (Hamza, Ewing, Heath, & Goldstein, 2020).

Current Study

- Participants: 190 individuals, 97 completing the survey before the COVID-19 pandemic and 93 completing the survey after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Categories were male or female and pre-COVID or post-COVID.
- Pre-COVID and post-COVID groups showed no significant differences on demographic variables

Materials

- Amazon Mechanical Turk was used to collect data from participants ($n = 190$) through a survey about dieting and body image.
- Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale. Used to measure self-esteem. All subscales used. (Rosenberg, 1979)
- Objectified Body Consciousness Scale: measured body shame, surveillance, and control (McKinley & Hyde, 1996).
 - Body shame: "I feel like I must be a bad person when I don't look as good as I could."
 - Surveillance: "I often worry about whether the clothes I am wearing make me look good."
 - Control: "I think a person can look pretty much how they want to if they are willing to work at it."

Results

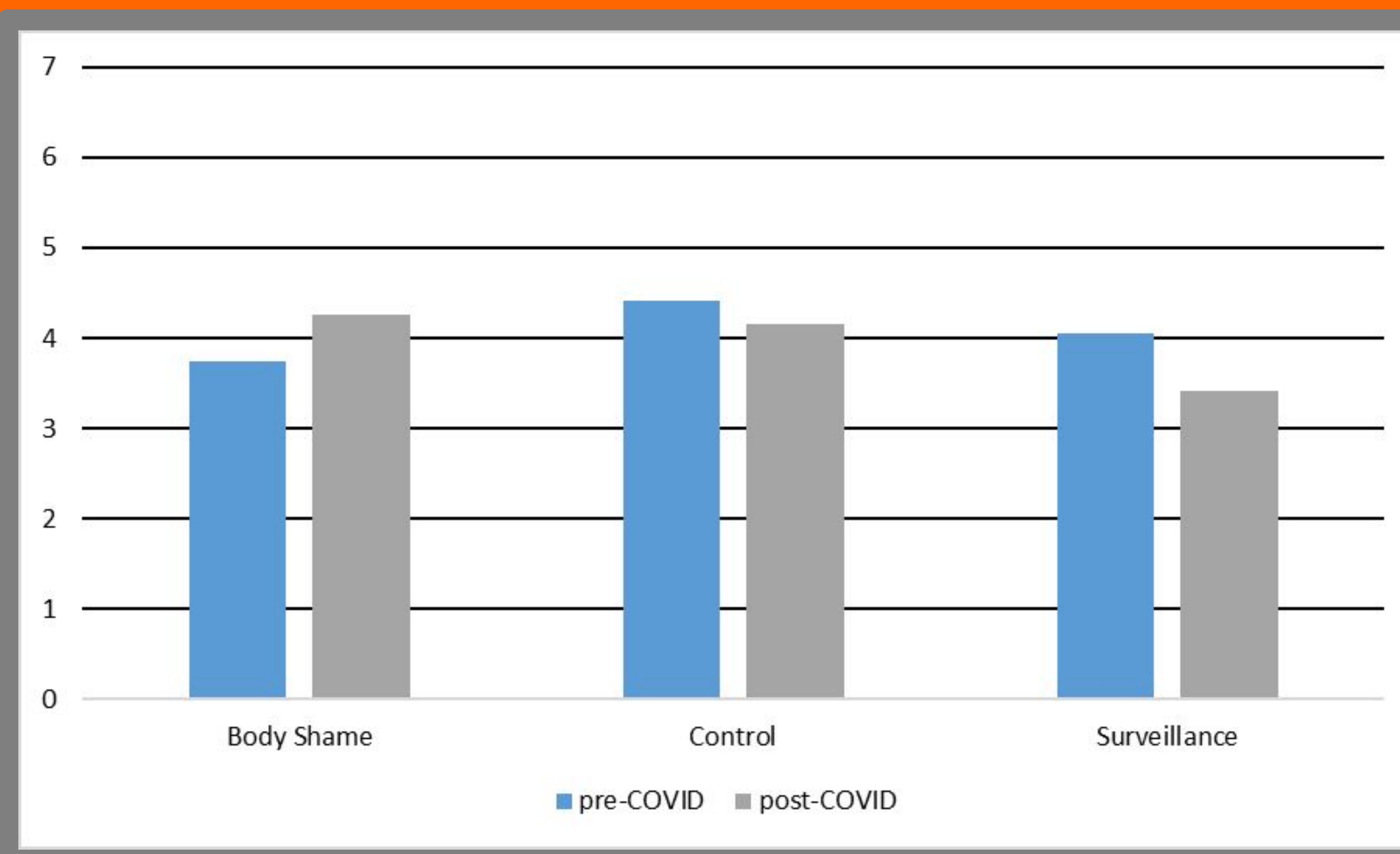
Comparisons by Group

- Body shame was higher after the onset of the pandemic ($N = 190$), $t(188) = -3.52, p = .001$.
- Control was lower after the onset of the pandemic ($N = 190$), $t(188) = 3.367, p = .001$.
- Surveillance was lower after the onset of the pandemic ($N = 190$), $t(188) = 4.904, p = .000$.
- Prior to the onset of COVID-19, females possessed a higher level of surveillance than males ($N = 94$), $t(92) = -3.302, p = .001$.

Correlations

- There was a significant negative association between self-esteem and body shame ($r = .539, p = .000$).
- There was a significant positive association between self-esteem and control ($r = -.458, p = .000$).

Figure 1: Objectified Body Consciousness Levels by Group



Discussion

- Independent samples t-tests between pre-COVID and post-COVID onset revealed that individuals body shame themselves more after the onset of the pandemic. This could potentially be due to increased isolation and more time spent at home.
- Surveillance of the body and attempt to control appearance decreased after the onset of the pandemic. These results are likely due to individuals staying home and the likely associated decreased social pressure.
- Before the onset of the pandemic, females possessed a higher level of surveillance than males.
- In general, the lower an individual's self-esteem was, the higher their body shame was, revealing that the two are closely related.
- In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic is significantly affecting the general population's view of their bodies, but more research needs to be conducted.

Contact:
Olivia Clune
cluneo@findlay.edu
The University of Findlay