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UWill Discover 2017

Mar 31st, 10:30 AM - 11:50 AM

#orthorexia on Instagram: Exploring the online conversation and community using the Netlytic software

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Lacasse, Jillian; Santarossa, Sara; and Woodruff, Sarah J., "#orthorexia on Instagram: Exploring the online conversation and community using the Netlytic software" (2017). *UWill Discover Undergraduate Conference*. 3.
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Abstract: #orthorexia on Instagram: Exploring the online conversation and community using the Netlytic software

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Background: Orthorexia nervosa is the pathological obsession for consuming only biologically pure food that may lead to the development of specific ritualistic attitudes towards food preparation and the restriction of specific food groups that can be harmful to one's health (Zamora et al., 2005; Matera, 2012). Aim: Due to the rise in popularity with Instagram and online eating disorder communities, and the potential negative outcomes on psychosocial health, the purpose of this descriptive study was to investigate images tagged with *#orthorexia* on Instagram over 7 days. Methods: A mixed methods approach was utilized for this study. A text analysis was conducted using the Netlytic program (Gruzd, 2016) to explore for emerging themes of discussion specifically using word count frequency, and a network analysis using both a name network (i.e., who mentions whom) and a chain network (i.e., who replies to whom) was performed. Among a subsample of images, author/image information was manually obtained, and a coding scheme (adapted from Tiggemann and Zaccardo, 2016) was implemented for a subsample of images (results pending). Results: Among the 4,533 records downloaded, there were 48,780 unique words associated with the posts (in the description of the picture or in the comment section). Majority of most commonly used words were associated with eating disorder recovery (i.e., 425 instances of *#edrecovery*; 340 instances of *#recovery*; 297 instances of *#eatingdisorderrecovery*). The chain network/direct interactions analysis indicated a large online presence with 1,503 nodes (i.e., users) and 1,803 ties (i.e., direct replies between users). The coding of *#orthorexia* images is pending but will help us further understand the orthorexia online community. Conclusions: As the network analysis and text analysis suggested an eating disorder recovery theme, this suggests that Instagram may be being used as a supportive and interactive community for those who have/had symptoms of orthorexia.