

ALGORITHMS, ADDICTION, AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH: An Interdisciplinary Study to Inform State-level Policy Action to Protect Youth from the Dangers of Social Media

February 12, 2024 | Article | Co-Authored by Mackenzie Almassian |
American Journal of Law & Medicine, Volume 49, Issue 2-3, July 2023

A recent Wall Street Journal investigation revealed that TikTok floods child and adolescent users with videos of rapid weight loss methods, including tips on how to consume less than 300 calories a day and promoting a "corpse bride diet," showing emaciated girls with protruding bones. The investigation involved the creation of a dozen automated accounts registered as 13-year-olds and revealed that TikTok algorithms fed adolescents tens of thousands of weight-loss videos within just a few weeks of joining the platform. Emerging research indicates that these practices extend well beyond TikTok to other social media platforms that engage millions of U.S. youth on a daily basis.

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