**The impact of social media on adolescent health and wellbeing**

This is an exciting opportunity to conduct an applied, fully funded, PhD. The successful candidate will be based at the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR), University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol. They will benefit from being part of a thriving university research centre focussed on psychosocial aspects of appearance, with a strong, vibrant postgraduate community, and strong links with relevant charitable organisations and health professionals. The supervisory team will include senior members of CAR and the Bristol Leadership and Change Centre (BLCC).

CAR is the world’s largest group of researchers focusing on the role of body image and appearance in people’s lives. CAR strives to make a real difference to the lives of the millions with appearance-related concerns both in the United Kingdom and across the world and is internationally regarded as a centre for excellence for psychological and interdisciplinary research in appearance, disfigurement, body image, and related studies.

Social media has become an integral part of life for most British adolescents, with 95% of U.K 15 year olds using at least one social networking services, with over half of 10-15 year olds spending up to 3 hours per day using social media. Despite a number of general risks being identified (e.g., cyberbullying, sexual predators), little is yet known about the potential implications of social networking use on adolescent health and wellbeing. Research has demonstrated links between adolescent social media use and poorer body image, and body image concerns have in turn been linked to disordered eating, lowered self-esteem, depression, and unsafe sexual and health behaviours. Given these established links, there is an urgent need to understand the potential negative impacts of the social media environment on adolescent health and wellbeing.

The proposed research will examine multiple aspects of the social networking environment in efforts to disentangle the role that each plays in wellbeing.

* The first aim of the PhD is to examine the impact of adolescent social networking use on a broad range of wellbeing indicators including body image, depression, and ‘risky’ health behaviours (such as alcohol and drug consumption, self-harm and risky sexual behaviours).
* The second aim of the PhD is to examine the efficacy of classroom based social media literacy programs in improving wellbeing in adolescent girls and boys.

There is room for the candidate to offer their own thoughts and ideas to shape the PhD.

Upon completion of the PhD, the student would have expertise in the impact of social media on adolescent wellbeing, intervention approaches to encourage healthy social media use, and could be in a position to continue work in this field at a post-doctoral level and establish themselves as a future leading figure in this research area.

The proposed supervision team is Dr Amy Slater, Dr Emma Halliwell and Dr Yvette Morey.

For an informal discussion about the studentship, please contact Dr Amy Slater amy.slater@uwe.ac.uk.