

Teen Girls' Trust and Usage of Social Media Outlets Regarding Health Content

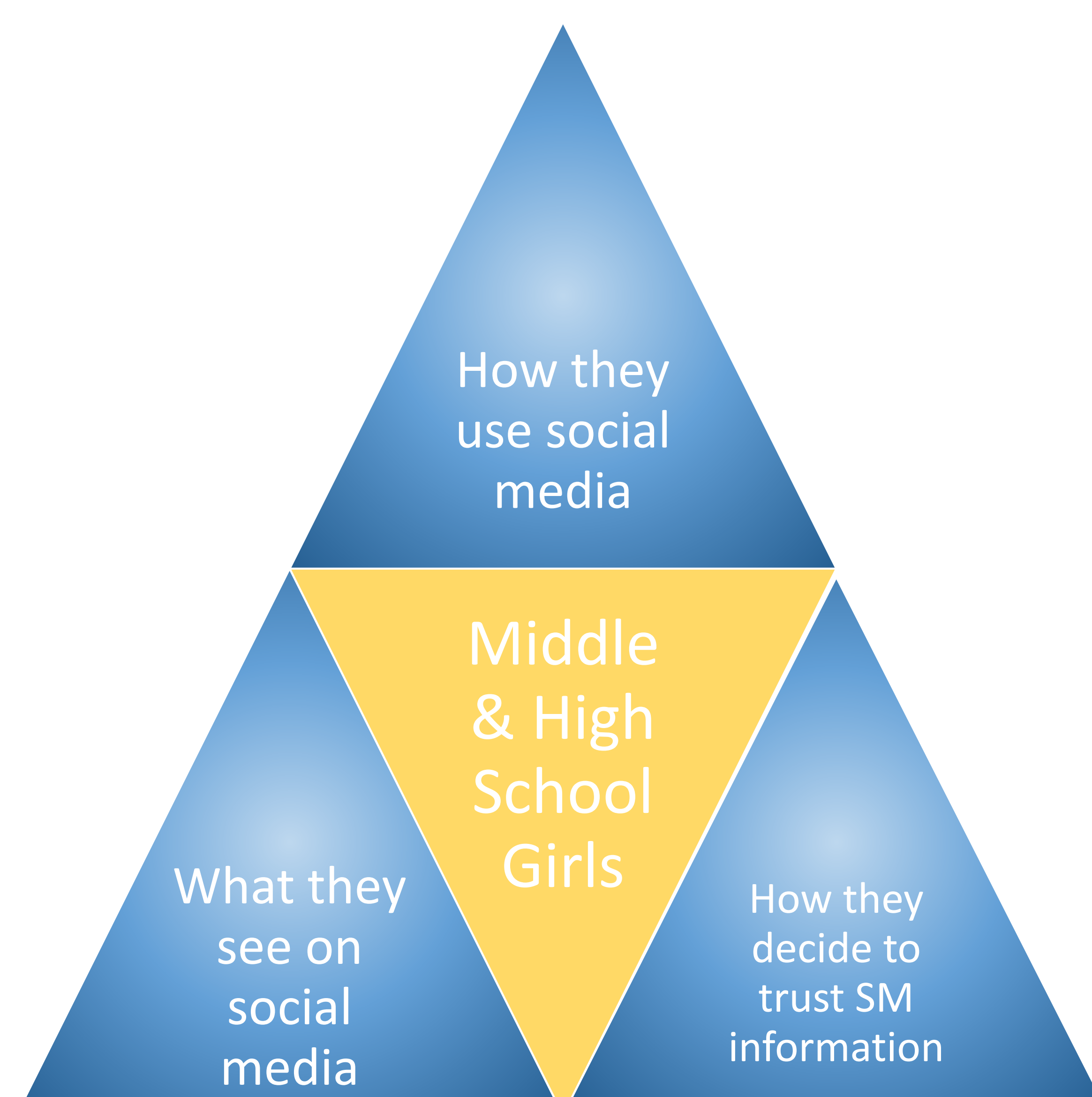
O.N. Kinkade^{1*}, M.P. Leary¹, M.E. Santella¹, F. Barazzetta¹, P.J. Murray¹, J. Downs², M.D. Olfert¹
West Virginia University¹; Carnegie Mellon University²



LIFESTYLE INTERVENTION
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Objective

- To determine teen girls' trust and usage of social media (SM) regarding nutrition and physical activity related information.



Methods

- Researchers recruited middle and high school aged girls from local high schools
- Girls were asked to participate in an online survey and small focus group, with assent and consent obtained beforehand
- Focus groups comprised of 3-5 teenage girls from a local Morgantown MS/HS, a trained female moderator, and a note
- Data was compared for verification of saturation
- Content analyzed by researchers trained in quantitative and thematic data analysis, with a third party used for tiebreakers in thematic analysis



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Results

- Eight MS (age: 12.4 ± 0.7 years; BMI: 25.2 ± 8.9 kg/m²) girls and 19 HS (age: 16.1 ± 1.3 years; BMI: 23.3 ± 3.6 kg/m²) girls participated in online surveys and focus groups
- Girls reported primarily using Instagram and Snapchat as a means to connect and communicate with friends, with data showing that while teen girls primarily follow friends on SM, they also follow celebrities, athletes, and some health pages.
- In relation to health and nutrition information, girls cited seeing workout posts, recipes, and pictures of food, with both groups seeing ads for food and weight loss supplements
- In terms of trusting the content seen on SM, girls agreed that trust was strengthened if content was coming from someone they knew personally

"I would definitely trust my friends more than celebrities although I do aspire to be like them."

- Both groups tended to trust information more if having seen it posted repeatedly, but distrusted information if it was paid or sponsored.
- In the face of dubious information, girls recommended fact checking by doing an internet search or asking a trusted individual

Conclusion

- Teen girls see fitness and other health related content on SM and recognize the potential to encounter false information
- Though verifying dubious information was recommended, teen girls rely on less stringent methods for trusting health related information on SM
- While teen girls recognize the need to verify information, it is hard to determine whether or not they use these practices in their own lives, leaving the potential for misinformation

