Men worry about body image, too

Cosima Marriner

Lachlan Batton, Reiley Dunlop and Harrison Fisk used to think only girls felt pressure to look good. Now in year 10, the boys feel equally obliged to live up to certain body ideals.

"It's the same for both genders - they want to impress each other," Reiley said. "It's not always shown by the man but definitely inside somewhere there will be some pressure."

Lachlan agreed: "I thought it would be women [that were affected], but as I've gotten older I've come to realise it is very much the same for men, too."

The schoolmates say boys were judged on whether they were fit, how they carried themselves, the way they dressed, their hair, face and skin.

This pressure to look good is exacerbated by social media feeds crowded with pictures of friends, celebrities and sporting heroes all looking their best.

"Whether it's people you aspire to be like, friends whose opinions you appreciate or you like what they're doing, you get influenced by that," Harrison said.

"There is so much out there," Lachlan said. "It affects some people, but not me."

Men who are very unhappy with their bodies suffer greater mental health problems than women with body image issues, according to a new study by the University of Sydney in collaboration with other Australian universities.

In the first research of its kind to establish how negative body image affects men and women differently, 2000 adults were surveyed about body dissatisfaction and its impact on their quality of life.

Study participants were asked

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