Exploring Instagram Commenters' Responses to Influencer Steroid Use

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Introduction

- *The problem within my field of study is that **steroids are becoming more common** in both bodybuilding and fitness and daily life causing younger people to have more **heart problems.***
- *Past 5 years has seen **10% increase** in hospital visits regarding anabolic steroids as steroid use is increasing and the age of usage is decreasing.*
- *A 2022 study showed users of social media had an increase in the thought of using anabolic steroids with reports of **exposure nearly 30% of days**.*
- *Currently, it is not known if the growth of steroid usage through social media can be attributed to the drug itself, or the influencers who are using or not using them as there are very few studies regarding the issue*
- ***Purpose of this study was to explore how Instagram users react to influencers who claim to use steroids, and analyze how commenters respond, positively or negatively to the video***

Methods
Design
- I will be using a content analysis of the captions and reels on instagram as well as LIWC variables for the comments.
- I will analyze the video to check for steroid use and/or promotion.

Subjects
- *Comments are the subjects of the study as well as the reel itself*
- *Video must have **10,000+ views** and cannot be a repost*
- *Comments have to be **5+ words**, in English, and contain **#steroid***
- *10 videos x at most 10 comments is around **100 comments***

Data Collection
- Reels were identified by searching #steroid on Instagram.
- The first 5 eligible videos were selected, and the first 10 non-pinned comments per video were collected for analysis

Measures

Content Analysis

Steroid user	Doper, substance use, roids, juice, tren, roid rage
Non-steroid user	Natural, anti steroids, only protein,
Motivational Captions	Staying natty, Keep it up, Good Work
Health risk	Dangerous, heart problems

LIWC Variables

Positive	Happy, excited, strong
Reward	Take, prize, benefits
Risk	Danger, doubt
Negative	Sad, fake, ugly, nasty

Analysis
- *Count how many post have visual signs of steroids*
  - *Descriptive statistics were used to compile the proportion of positive, negative, or mixed reactions to visual signs*
- *Percentage of posts that receive mostly positive vs. negative vs. mixed comments*
  - *LIWC was used for this analysis*
- *Average number of likes, comments, and saves per post*
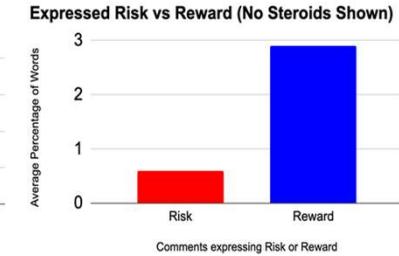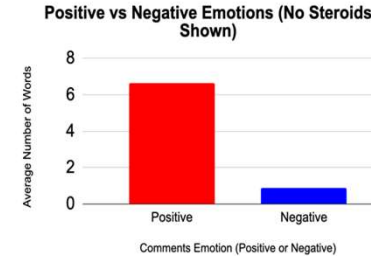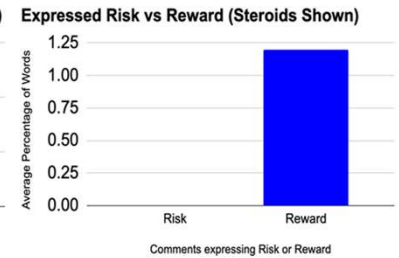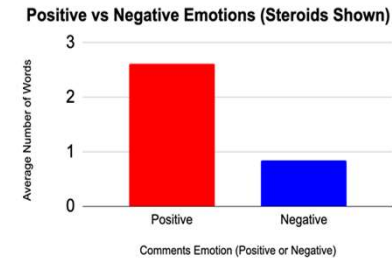- *Percent of comments expressing risk or benefits to steroids*

Results

Subject Information
- *10 reels, 77 comments*

Total Counts	Likes	Comments	Shares
Steroid User	370,500	930	87,311
Non-Steroid User	7,233	521	78
Total	377,733	1,451	87,389
Averages	Likes	Comments	Shares
Steroid User	74,100	186	17,462.2
Non-Steroid User	1,446.6	104.2	15.6
Total	37,773.3	145.1	8,738.9

Total Counts	Health Risk	Motivational Caption
Steroid User	2	2
Non-Steroid User	1	2
Total	3	4

LIWC Data

Positive vs Negative Emotions (Steroids Shown)

Expressed Risk vs Reward (Steroids Shown)

Positive vs Negative Emotions (No Steroids Shown)

Expressed Risk vs Reward (No Steroids Shown)

Comments:
"You meant 'How to get cancer quickly'"
"Brother where do you find steroids?"

Conclusions
Key findings
- *For many of the reels that contained steroids in any way shape or form, users were more likely to interact through shares, likes, comments*
  - *However, it seems as if the posts that contain steroid influencers within the video have less positive reactions than those that do not contain steroids*
- *The risk and reward was not mainly talked about within the comments or videos, thus leading to the idea that steroids may not pose as dangerous to many people who see them online or take them*

Limitations
- *Not able to collect all 10 comments from the videos*
  - *Some videos didn't have enough comments that met the criteria needed to analyze them*
- *My data may have been skewed as some of the comments that couldn't be included used language suggesting either a very positive or negative reaction to the video*

Implications
- *With more likes, shares, and comments, the videos with steroids displayed and talked about positively are being spread more often causing more and more people to become aware of steroids but only with a biased point of view*
- *Future research could focus more intensely on the risk vs reward side of anabolic steroids and how people view them when they are either considering taken steroids themselves or seeing someone take steroids*

Acknowledgements

Contact us
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