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# INFLUENCE OF SUICIDE IMAGES ON INSTAGRAM

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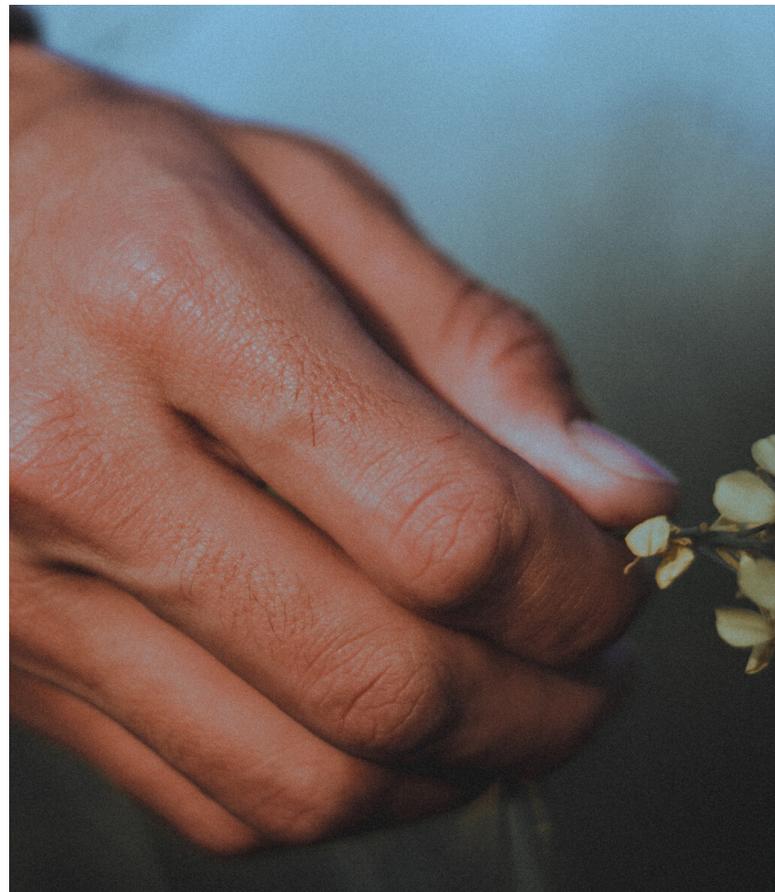
# RESEARCH INTO THE TYPES AND EFFECTS OF SUICIDE IMAGES

## Research

A 14-year-old girl named Molly Russel from the United Kingdom committed suicide and her parents said it was Instagram's fault. Instagram allows self-harm accounts, which post different images of people hurting themselves. On October 27, 2019, Instagram announced that it prohibits posting images of self-harm and that it is attempting to block suicide images through search restrictions.

In the present research the following research question is used: To what extent do the hashtags #selfharm and #selfinjury differ in the content characteristics and scope of self-harm images on Instagram and what are the consequences of these images?

When researching the images, I looked at how suicide images are presented on Instagram. Two different hashtags were used: one without any restrictions from Instagram and one with restrictions from Instagram. The effects of these suicide images were researched and how these search restrictions impact the number of suicide images on Instagram. The importance of this research is especially to help other organizations who fight against the causes of suicide and who try to help people of all ages to fight against suicide. Besides, it is also helpful for Instagram to take a look at how they can help combat suicide caused by Instagram suicide images.



# RESULTS OF RESEARCH

## SUICIDE IMAGES

These images are very common on Instagram and they can be linked to different emotions like hate or suicide methods like cutting. The results show that the search restrictions work a little because fewer people are reached by suicide images. This shows that this search restriction should be implemented for more hashtags, making it more difficult for users to fulfill their needs with the medium, which can also reduce imitation and observation. On the other hand, more information material has to be placed, which is still far too rare for both hashtags.

## HASHTAGS

Both hashtags contain a lot of different suicide images, but the hashtag without blocks contained more suicide images. The first reason may be that the hashtag #selfharm is well protected with the search restriction which can lead to a diminishing response count. A second reason may be that the hashtag #selfinjury has users who are more motivated to post different responses, such as the helper and the emoji response.

## EFFECTS OF SUICIDE IMAGES

The suicide images can cause a copycat effect, which means that other people imitate the suicide method which was used by the previous person. This is a negative effect which needs to be solved.



**The strategy Instagram is currently using still leads to the loss of innocent lives. Many lives can be saved by applying greater search restrictions, by posting educational materials and better algorithms.**

