

## **Capio Nightingale Hospital Warns of dangers of Pro-Anorexia websites**

### **Hospital calls on industry to drive improved regulation of these sites**

With all eyes on the runway in the run-up to London Fashion Week and the Size Zero debate continuing to rage, **Capio Nightingale Hospital**, Central London's only independent mental health hospital, is calling for stringent regulation of pro-Ana sites which celebrate the emaciated forms of these malnourished models.

There is an ever-increasing number of these websites, created to offer so-called **Thinspiration** to vulnerable eating disorders sufferers. From tips on how not to eat, to posts on how to cheat your way through treatment and photographs of celebrities with 'enviable' figures, these websites cause untold damage. Youngsters of any age can access these sites, whose **unregulated forums** have the potential to do enormous harm. Capio Nightingale Hospital specialists have witnessed an **increase in the number of eating disorders patients who have regularly visited these websites** to fuel their conditions, hindering the treatment process.

The use of underweight models at London Fashion Week is likely to fuel aspirational discussions on pro-Ana sites, which offer a **dangerously distorted perspective** on the benefits of having such a fragile frame. But what is never mentioned – and what most concerns the eating disorders specialists at Capio Nightingale Hospital – is any kind of medically informed counterbalance explaining that aspiring to a **below normal BMI compromises physical and mental health and wellbeing** with sufferers likely to damage their heart and other major organs.

The personification of "Ana" and "ED" (eating disorders) means that these websites externalise these conditions transforming them into aspirational figures to be idolised, with huge peer pressure exercised by other members of the forums. It is when sufferers are at their most emotionally compromised, with incredibly low self-esteem, that they are most susceptible to the dangerous, ill-advised information from these sites – made all the more dangerous by the fact that they are often too unstable to really consider the consequences.

**Dr Yoram Inspector, a Consultant Psychiatrist in the Eating Disorders team at Capio Nightingale Hospital** commented: *"One of the most dangerous aspects to these pro-Ana websites is the romanticising of what is a very serious, potentially life-threatening condition. There is no doubt that stringent regulation needs to be introduced with warnings about the consequences of the condition made highly visible on the sites, such as on cigarette packaging, to avoid what is technically abuse of the vulnerable – we have an obligation to help the creators of these sites, who are equally vulnerable, as much as those who visit them. There is no knowing how much damage these sites may have already done, but we should be committed to ensuring that steps are taken to restrict content and offer a more balanced perspective with qualified psychiatrists*

*able to engage the users in conversation to outline the associated dangers and encourage them to seek help. If we sit back and do nothing, we are all silent witnesses to an abuse.”*

-Ends-

To find out more about the therapies and treatment programmes offered at the Cario Nightingale Hospital please phone **0800 783 0594 (24hrs)** or visit [www.nightingalehospital.co.uk](http://www.nightingalehospital.co.uk).

**For more information:**

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**Notes to Editors:**

Cario Nightingale Hospital is the leading independent mental health hospital in central London. They are experts in treating individuals with mental health or emotional issues through their highly experienced Consultant Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Specialist Therapists and Nurses. The hospital's multi-disciplinary teams offer evidence-based and individually tailored treatment programmes for outpatients, inpatients and day care patients. To view their extensive range of services, therapies and enhanced treatments please visit [www.nightingalehospital.co.uk](http://www.nightingalehospital.co.uk).

*Cario Nightingale Hospital...Building confidence and well being in a safe and healing environment*