The Relationship Between Social Media Use and Negative Mental Health Outcomes

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Introduction

- Social networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat, which gained prominence in the early 2000s, have become a staple among teenagers and young adults. All of these platforms incorporate self-expression, explicit positive feedback, and implicit negative feedback.

- Key contributors to SNSs’ prominence are technological advancements and the increase of their availability (i.e., smartphones, tablets, laptops).

Variables

All of the variables were obtained through self-reported questionnaires or measures, which are subject to recall and other biases.

Measured SNS-related behaviors
- Frequency of technology use
- Overall SNS use
- Nighttime-specific SNS use
- Emotional investment in social media
- Excessive reassurance-seeking
- Technology-based Social Comparison and Feedback Seeking (SCFS)

Social support

Wellbeing outcomes
- Depression or depressive symptoms
- Anxiety
- Self-esteem
- Sleep

Moderators
- Popularity
- Gender
- Sense of self-purpose

Results

- An increase in SNS use is associated with an increase in the incidence of negative mental health outcomes.

- The number of “likes” an individual receives is positively associated with self-esteem.

- A greater perceived social support lessens the likelihood of probable mental health issues.

- Technology-based SCFS is positively associated with depressive symptoms.

Future Work

- Since SNSs are a new phenomenon, there is a need to examine long-term effects and other effects such as addiction, bullying, and social support.

- A causative relationship can be examined and established between SNS usage and negative mental health outcomes as only a correlative relationship has been established.

- Ways to monitor negative mental health issues through the use of SNSs can be developed and implemented in the future.

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References


Nesi et al.