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## **Impact of Social Media on Mental Health among Adolescents**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Mental health is a critical concern in today's society, with social media playing a significant role in promoting health and well being. However, adolescent have been immersed in a highly advanced technology setting, specifically characterized by the extensive availability of personal devices of social media platforms, which adversely impact their mental health. The excessive usage of the social media lead to diverse negative effects including social isolation, internet addiction, and exposure to improper content, depression, cyber bullying and sleeping difficult which have arise as an escalating concern for the mental health of adolescents. However digital technology is integral to their lives and utilizing social media positively promotes the health and well being of the adolescents. This conceptual paper aims to study negative as well as positive impact of social media and discuss on ways to mitigate and improve the positive impact on the mental health among adolescents.

Keynote: Social media, mental health, Adolescents

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### **Introduction**

In today's digital age, adolescents are engaged in a technologically advanced environment marked by widespread access to personal devices, the internet and various social media, significantly influencing their psychosocial development. The increase in digital engagement presents both benefits and concerns. However, concerns arise regarding negative consequences such as internet addiction, exposure to inappropriate content, depression cyber bullying and sleep deprivation.

The influence of social media on mental health among adolescent continues to expand significantly where adolescent are committing an exalting amount of their time to diverse networking platforms, participating in networking, e-games and messaging. Prior studies suggest a correlation between heightened social media use as contributing factor in mental health problems. Maintaining good mental health is integral to the overall wellbeing of individuals, including adolescent. The world health organization (WHO) notes that mental issues arise in late childhood and early adolescence, affecting about 10% of children and adolescents globally. Besides study found that generalized anxiety disorder and depression are most prevalent among children and adolescents. Mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and stress are becoming increasingly occurring among the teenagers. According to the National Institute of mental health, approximately 20% of teenagers have mental health disorder. Furthermore suicide is the second leading cause of death among teenagers in the United States.

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### **Risks of using social media**

While using social media as an integral part of the daily life of adolescents, there are number of risks associated with social media use specifically due to the Excessive use of social media has been linked to various negative effects on mental health among adolescents. One of the main concerns is the impact on self esteem and body image. Constant exposure to carefully curated and edited posts can lead to feelings of inadequacy and comparison, which can contribute to low self esteem and body dissatisfaction. (Berkman, 2010)

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### **FMO (Fear of missing out)**

Social media can also contribute to the feelings of loneliness and depression. While it may seem like social media connects people, it can actually increase feelings of isolation and FMO (Fear of missing out). Seeing others' highlight reels can make individuals feel left out and think that they are not living up to the exciting lives which are portrayed on online. (Alutaybi.2020)

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## Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying is another significant concern where social media provides a platform for anonymous or public harassment, which can have severe emotional and psychological consequences for the adolescent victim. The constant exposure can lead to increased anxiety, depression and can even lead to feeling of committing suicide. The driving factors in cyber bullying include reduces social and contextual cues and a perceived lack of consequences. Several major reasons that a traditional bully may stop or avoid their actions in the first place are missing from the online contest, such as empathy upon seeing how upset the victim is or fear of social consequences from peers and those in authority.( Campbell et al . (2013)

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## Face book depression

Scholars have anticipate a new phenomenon called Face book depression, defined as depression that develops when preteens and teens spend a great deal of time on social media sites such as Face book, and then begin to exhibit classic symptoms of depression. Acceptance and contact with peers is an important element of adolescent life the intensity of the online world is thought to be factor that may produce depression in some adolescents. As with offline depression, preadolescents and adolescents who suffer from face book depression are at risk for social isolation and at times turn to risky internet sites and blogs for “help” that may promote substance abuse, unsafe sexual practices, or aggressive or self destructive behaviors’. (O’ Keeffe al, 2011)

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## Sexting/Texting

Sexting can be defined as “Sending, receiving, or forwardly sexually explicit messages, photographs, or images via cell phone, computer or other digital advices.” Many of these images become distributed rapidly via cell phones or the internet .This phenomenon does occur among the adolescent population; recent survey reveals that 20% of adolescents have sent or posted nude or seminude photographs or videos of themselves. Some adolescents who have engaged in Sexting have been threatened or charged with felony child pornography charges although some states have started characterizing such behaviors as juvenile-law misdemeanors. Additional consequences include school suspension for perpetrators and emotional distress with accompanying health conditions for victims. (Y Barrense-Dias.2017)

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## Social Pressure

The American Psychological Association defines social pressure as “the exertion of influence on a person or group by another person or group” Social media can create pressure to conform to certain standards for trends. Adolescents may feel compelled to present a certain image or gain validation through likes and comments. Their actions, influenced by peers, might not only impact their well being but may also damage the emotional health of loved one behavior that can be destructive. According to one survey, as many as 39% of adolescent social media users report feeling pressure to post comment that will “be popular and get lots of comments and likes. (Lenhart 2015b).

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## Sleep disruption

The Excessive use of social media can disrupt sleep patterns and lead to addictive behaviors production of melatonin, the blue light emitted by screens can interfere with the production of melatonin, making it harder to fall asleep. Moreover, the constant need for validation and the fear of missing out can drive individuals to spend excessive amounts on social media, leading to neglect of other important activities and relationships. A previous study reported that over 80% of adolescents use electronic devices near bedtime which adversely affect the sleeping quality and thus remains a primary risk for subsequent mental health concerns among the adolescents. in their study for finding the association between problematic internet use and sleep in adolescents, found that problematic internet users were at higher risk (2.41) of sleep disturbance, and they recommended that improving the sleep patterns of adolescents and internet use was needed.( Jiewen Yang et al., 2018)

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## Benefits for using Social Media

The wise use of social media can contribute numerous benefits to adolescents. The benefits fall in the following categories: Socialization and Communication, Enhanced learning opportunities and accessing health information.

### *Socialization and Communication*

Adolescents use of social media can increase their socialization and communication by allowing them to stay connected with friends and families, make new friends, and share pictures (Hong et .al. 2014). Social media participation offer deeper benefits that extends into their view of self, community and the world, including opportunity for community engagement through raising money for charity and volunteering for local events, including political and philanthropic events; enhancement of individual and collective creativity through development and sharing of artistic and musical endeavors; expansion of one’s online connections through shred interests to include others from diverse backgrounds where such communication is an important step for all adolescents and affords the opportunity for respect, tolerance and increase discourse about personal and global issues and fostering of one’s individual identity and unique social skills.

### ***Enhanced Learning Opportunities***

Social media usage among adolescents may also enhance learning opportunities by creating connections through group projects and exchanging ideas, which are critical mediums of learning in the post pandemic era (Alimradi et al., 2022; Ruckwongpatr et al., 2011). Social media provide platforms offer a wealth of information on various subjects. Adolescents can follow educational accounts, join groups and engage with experts and professional in their field of interest. This access to diverse knowledge expands their learning opportunities beyond traditional classroom settings. For example, Face book and similar social media programs allow students to gather outside of class to collaborate and exchange ideas about assignments. Some schools successfully used blogs as teaching tools, which has the benefit of reinforcing skills in English, written Expression and creativity.

### ***Accessing Health Information***

The adolescents daily use of social media, namely cell phones, instant messaging and text messaging have already produced multiple improvements in their health care such as increased medication adherence, better disease understanding and fewer missed appointments. Adolescents with chronic illness can access web sites through which they can develop supportive networks of people with similar conditions. Given that the new social media venues all have mobile applications, teenagers will enhanced opportunities to learn about their health issues and communicate with their doctors. However, adolescents can encounter inaccuracies during these searches and may require parental involvement ensuring they are using reliable online resources, interpreting the information correctly, and not being overwhelmed by the information they are reading.

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## **Discussion**

Due to the overwhelming degree of reliance on social media platforms, it has detrimental effects on psychological and physiological levels on the adolescents. According to earlier studies, the likelihood of developing depressive symptoms in later life is 1.5 times higher than that moderate usage of social media.

In this 21<sup>st</sup> century social media have been by everyone to their full potential to attain the basis sources. Therefore people's well being is constantly at an extremely high degree. However people might also experience adverse affects from high level of well-being. As adolescent period is vulnerable to stress, depression and other mental health disorders, the government especially the policymakers need to strengthen protection by developing the age-appropriate health and safety standards, requiring a higher standard of data privacy for children and strengthening and enforcing age minimum and the encouragement of the advisory can enhance protection for young users on the social media platforms, mandate technology companies to share the healthy impacts of their platforms, endorse the creation of digital literacy curricula in schools, and provide additional funding for research on the pros and cons of social media usage.

Another element contributing to social media addiction is the excessive use that adolescents have with their phones. While most research indicates that social media have adverse effect on one's mental health contradictory reports include both positive and negative effects. To mitigate the negative effect parents and caregivers can play a vital role of a supporter by creating open conversation about their online experiences, setting up a family media plan and a educating themselves and their children about various social media platforms by promoting their overall psychological and social well being. The Schools and institutions also need to provide counseling and information towards the adolescent students. A proper consciousness movement can be started to comprehend the long term effects of social media on adolescents. The parents should also afford a positive influence concerning the use of social media in schools and home. The social media application should be restricted to certain age limits. Proper time limitations should be fixed on certain applications for adolescents ensuring that they only at desired times under the surveillance of their guardians. (Gupta Psychiatry, Jun28, 2023)

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## **Conclusion**

In conclusion this conceptual article emphasize that social media will continue to hold significant importance in adolescent lives and be a part of a social structure for many years to come. Therefore the adolescent can cope the strategies to overcome the negative impact on its mental health, seek support from trusted friends and families. Excessive timer spent on social media is a factor, however specific social media experiences upon vulnerable individuals are more are likely more influential in some adolescent and deserve attention when assessing for risks of use. Overall, by recognizing the positive influences and benefits of social media by adolescents can help to work towards creating a healthier and more supportive online environment for adolescent.

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