



The Impact of Social Media on Sleep Disturbances Among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT :

This conceptual paper investigates the many connections between use of social media and sleep disturbance in young adults between 18 and 29, a demographic closely related with digital tools including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikHub. Given that 90% of young adults use social media, the study looks at how late-night use affects sleep duration and quality negatively. Cognitive and emotional arousal, blue light exposure, and social media use timing all contribute to disturbed sleep patterns. Looking at present studies, this paper emphasizes the physiological and psychological processes social media use makes young adults suffer from poor sleep quality and sleep issues. By stressing the vicious cycle of poor sleep, anxiety, and excessive social media use, the article also tackles mental health. Though social media might encourage improved sleep hygiene, studies conducted lately indicate that its detrimental impact on sleep surpasses these benefits. The study recommends future research to look at strategies including controlling screen time, emotional responses, and designing interventions to promote better social media use that would help to offset the negative consequences of social media on sleep.

INTRODUCTION :

The increasing number of studies on social media's effects on different aspects of health, particularly sleep, reflects its widespread influence on young adults' lives. Roughly 90% of young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 use social media platforms such Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikHub as of 2023 (Pew Research Center, 2023). Often spending much of their day, even late at night, scrolling news feeds, watching videos, and engaging with others, these individuals are quite active on these platforms. This change in communication and entertainment patterns has significantly changed their daily activities and, as recent studies indicate, upset their sleep cycle.

Generally speaking, young adults—those between 18 and 29 years old—are a group quite active on social media platforms (Pew Research Center). Young adulthood is defined by significant changes: postsecondary education, early career ambitions, and more social independence all of which can affect physical and mental well-being. "Young adults" also describes people in a developmental phase marked by autonomy, identity questing, and social relationship building (Arnett, 2000). At this stage, the pressures of academic obligations, work hours, and social events can cause irregular sleep patterns.

Sleep is essential for general well-being, especially for young adults who need sufficient sleep to maintain cognitive capacity, emotional balance, and physical health. Abnormal sleep patterns—short sleep duration, poor quality sleep, and late sleep onset—have been linked to several health problems including anxiety, depression, and subpar academic performance (Hirshkowitz et al., 2015). Best health depends on sleep and circadian rhythms, which are basic (Buysse, 2014). Sleep deprivation impairs all cognitive function, mood, immunological state, cardiovascular risk, weight, and metabolism (Banks and Dinges, 2007, Grandner et al., 2010a, Van et al., 2008). Although under studied, the impact of social media on sleep is a vital field of research since studies indicate particular behaviors and trends connected to social media use might directly influence sleep (LeBourgeois et al., 2017; Pantic et al., 2012). This conceptual paper aims to investigate how sleep disturbance among young adults is affected by social media use. The following sections underline pertinent studies to identify mechanisms generating sleep disturbance and specify domains for future research directing intervention.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE :

Social Media and Sleep Disturbance

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Cognitive and emotional arousal

The nature of content that is viewed on social media also contributes to influencing sleep patterns. When people view and use content that is emotionally stimulating, for example, watching sad news, reading sensationalized controversy, or arguing, their emotional and cognitive reactions can make them have increased levels of anxiety and stress. These emotional reactions can persist even after people discontinue using their devices, complicating it for them to unwind and get ready for sleep. A study conducted by Custers and van den Bulck (2012) revealed that people who viewed emotionally stimulating content reported higher difficulty in falling asleep and lower sleep quality than people who used social media for neutral or stress-free functions. Cognitive arousal can also result from social comparison, which is a prevalent habit on social media platforms. The inclination to compare oneself to others is known as social comparison, and it is typically accompanied by feelings of inadequacy or anxiety, particularly when people are exposed to idealized depictions of other people's life. According to a study by Wood et al. (2016), young individuals are more likely to engage in social comparison on social media, which is associated with increased emotional discomfort. Further disruptions to sleep habits may result from this emotional strain.

The Role of Blue Light Exposure

Perhaps the most widely discussed physiological consequence of social media use is blue light exposure's effect on the circadian rhythm. Blue light, which radiates from the majority of digital devices, inhibits the release of melatonin, a hormone that induces sleep. Melatonin induces the brain to sleep, and suppression by blue light delays falling asleep, diminishes the quality of sleep, and disturbs the sleep-wake cycle in general (Harada et al., 2020). Blue light exposure effects are most alarming when social media use happens at night and evening hours when the body is programmed to rest. Referring to a study by Harada et al. (2020), individuals who spend more than two hours on electronics prior to sleep might experience significant delays in sleep onset. It may be harder for young adults to have sufficient sleep due to melatonin suppression and emotional and cognitive arousal associated with social media use.

Mental well-being and quality of sleep

It is frequently understood that poor sleep has negative effects on mental health. Poor sleep has been associated with heightened stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms and can lead to more intense and increased use of social media. As per research, individuals with sleep issues are likely to use social media as a way of coping, which exacerbates their sleep issues (Kelly et al., 2018). It is hard to break the cycle brought about by the interdependence of social media usage, lack of sleep, and mental illness without assistance. Kelly et al. (2018) discovered in a long-term study that young adults' use of social media was positively connected with higher levels of anxiety and depression symptoms. Poor sleep was found to make these symptoms worse, and when mental health problems and insufficient sleep coexist, it can seriously impair general wellbeing.

Social Media Use Patterns and Sleep

Social media use habits among young individuals might differ significantly, which can contribute to the extent of sleep affected. Primack et al. (2017), for example, found that young adults who used social media during late evenings especially after 10 p.m. experienced more frequent disturbances in sleep. In contrast, individuals who set explicit limits on their use of social media or who used it earlier in the day were less likely to have difficulty with sleep. These findings suggest that regulating the frequency and timing of social media use may be critical to minimizing its sleep negative effects. Additionally, some studies suggest that active social media use, like writing comments or participating in online discussions, might have a different impact on sleep than passive use, like just browsing through posts. As Przybylski and Weinstein (2017) state, passive consumption is less likely to lead to emotional arousal, which in turn might reduce sleep disturbances. The benefits of limiting social media use to passive discourse are still not known, however, and require further study.

Social Media as a Tool for Promoting Sleep

In addition to the adverse impact of social media on sleep, social media sites can also be utilized as a tool to promote better sleep hygiene. There are social media profiles, such as on Instagram and TikTok, that have come into being with the intention of encouraging sleep education and sleep health. Influencers and sleep experts leverage these websites to post

information on issues such as sleep habits, relaxation strategies, and the need to limit screen use prior to bedtime (Dunlop et al., 2020). The effectiveness of all these interventions combined remains a subject of study since most are also negated by other social media material that can reinforce bad sleep behaviors.

CONCLUSION :

Social media usage and sleep patterns among young adults have a complex and multidirectional relationship. The pervasive nature of social media calls for informing the public about its potential impact on sleep and encouraging healthier social media use, such as reducing screen time prior to bedtime, managing emotional responses to material on social media, and establishing regular sleep timetables. Social media use has a complicated and multifaceted effect on young adults' sleep habits, affecting physiological, emotional, and cognitive processes. Social media use has been connected to serious disturbances in the length and quality of sleep, despite the fact that it can also provide advantages like entertainment and social connections. Social comparison, emotional arousal, blue light exposure, and late-night activity are some of the factors that lead to poor sleep quality. The connection between social media use and mental health makes matters more complicated because sleep deprivation can make anxiety and depression worse, which can then result in more social media use. As studies further investigate the complexities of this interaction, it is important to establish interventions that support healthy sleep habits in young adults. Future research should aim to address strategies for social media management, examine the function of passive versus active involvement, and examine how social media can be utilized to enhance sleep hygiene.

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