

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MENTAL HEALTH

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Abstract

What is social media? It refers to the virtual means of interaction among people on various platforms in which they can create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Today with the internet expansion, social media has become a vital part of life. Social media is the title used to refer to the set of sites and tools that have been born and developed in the space created by modern media such as communication networks, the internet and mobile phones. Nowadays as social media has become part and partial of our life so it becomes important to discuss its effect of it on our mental health. As the effects of social media on users mental health is unclear, and the studies are going on, the aim of this paper is to discuss the role of social media on mental health.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

Received: 06.02.2023
Approved: 15.03.2023

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*SOCIAL MEDIA AND MENTAL
HEALTH*

Article No.04
RJPSS Oct.-Mar. 2023,
Vol. XLVIII No. 1,
pp. 026-032

Online available at:
<https://anubooks.com/rjpss-2023-vol-xlvihi-no-1/>

<https://doi.org/10.31995/rjpss.2023.v48i01.004>

Introduction

Mental health is very important at every stage of life to lead a balanced life. Our mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. As everyone faces good and bad times in life so our mental health decides how we think, feel and react during these ups and downs. Being mentally healthy is not necessarily about being free from problems. Everyone feels worried, anxious, sad, or stressed at various times in their lives and this is perfectly normal. The important is how we deal with these. If the mental health is not good then one can not deal with these which leads to miserable daily life. Social media platforms allow users to have virtual conversations with others, share different types of information and create new web content. There are many types of social media like : wikis, social networking sites, photo-sharing sites, instant messaging, video-sharing sites, blogs, micro-blogs, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds, and many more. When social media is used in limits it is very useful for human beings like : Useful for educational purposes , Social media allows you to reach a large audience and build your brand , Target audiences based on their interests, Stay up to date ,Get connected to new people, Create your audiences,Free to use. As excess of everything is bad same is with social media. The youth is getting attracted to social media and spends time and energy here only. they are getting addicted to it. The main problems faced are Fear of missing out (FOMO) , Depression and anxiety, Cyberbullying, and disturbed sleep. In this paper, we will discuss the mental health problems faced due to excessive use of social media.

Social Media Addiction

Excess of everything is bad. The same is with social media. Overuse of social media can ruin the balance and quality of life . The mental peace and health are finished. A person who has social media addiction spends his/her valuable time on this only and has no time left for other activities. He/She starts living virtual life and ends up with poor mental and physical health. Social media use can lead to low-quality sleep and harm mental health. It has associations with depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Many people in today's world live with their smartphones as virtual companions. Many teens spend so much time online that they may ignore interacting with the people right in front of them. For this reason, friendships and dating relationships can suffer .As a result, their real relationship is ruined.

Social Media and Mental Health Issues

Undoubtedly, social networking plays a vital role in the life of youth and everyone for building social connections and helping them learn valuable technical skills. But the main question is what impact is all of this social networking having on our minds? Most reports indicate that the impact can be significant. The people

spend more time on screen and less with nature. Mainly teens are developing brains vulnerable to so much time online. Additionally, they are facing more peer pressure, cyberbullying and leading to ill mental health.

Depression

Presently, we do not have very clear evidence of link between depression and social media but we can feel it clear that social media use can be associated with clear symptoms of depression, including a decrease in social activity and an increase in loneliness. For example, a study published in *Computers in Human Behaviour* found that the use of multiple social media sites increases more risk of depression more than the amount of time spent online. According to the study, people who used more than seven social media platforms had more than three times the risk of depression than people who used two or fewer social media sites with more time. It is obvious that the youth compare their life with others and feel depressed and want to be like others he/she does not understand that the best is presented on social media.

Anxiety

As we all use social media apps and we try to show our best on them, especially youth. The users often may feel emotionally fully invested in their social media accounts as a result they feel pressure to respond to others quickly online, some times they also feel pressure to have perfect posts (photos and well-written). As a result, one may encounter a great deal of anxiety. Many studies on this topic have found that a person with having larger social circle online may face more anxiety about keeping up to date with their account with everything online.

Sleep Deprivation

This is a major problem nowadays. As one spends so many hours on social media especially during night that he/she begins to lose valuable sleep. Consequently, this sleep loss can lead to many mental health issues which can result in to moodiness, a drop in grades, lack of physical activity, and overeating, as well as exacerbate existing problems like depression, anxiety, and digestion issues.

Jealousy and Envy Feelings

These are normal feelings but when we use social media and see one is having a more happy, wealthy and exciting life then these feelings can be aggravated especially in teens as they compare themselves to their peers. They do not understand that people show their best on these platforms. So their innocent minds are affected. This can be very dangerous for them.

Communication Issues

While social media is a great way to keep in touch with friends and family, it also is not the same as face-to-face communication. We cannot see a person's

facial expressions or hear their tone of voice online. As a result, it is very easy for misunderstandings to occur, especially when people try to be funny or sarcastic online.

How Can We Check Addiction of Social Media Addiction

A person has an addiction if he/she checks social media as soon as waking up in the morning and before leaving the bed.

If a person does scrolling on phone throughout the day again and again without any purpose .

If a person keeps posting too many photos on daily basis like: photos of each meal, each dress or each activity of the day.

How to Deal with Social Media Addiction

Usually, we think that if we use social media then we can overcome loneliness and depression but its not true. Rather we can reduce these symptoms by decreasing the use of social media. A person should be careful if he/she is facing some of the following issues :

Feeling increased anxiety, depression and/or loneliness .

Spending more time on social media(virtual world) than with friends and family(physically).

Overuse of social media may result in comparing with others life and feeling jealous unnecessarily.

Frequent use of social media increases the chances of being trolled or cyberbullied.

Seeing posts again and again to watch comments and likes.

Finding that your daily routine, office work and relationships are suffering .

Lacking in self-care (such as exercise, sleep and mindfulness) .

Feeling demotivated and unhealthy.

If one is noticing any of these warning signs, try to decrease your social media time by using some methods. It is understandable that the addiction can not leave you so easily but one should try . This can be achieved by setting screen time limits, setting time restrictions for certain social media apps on your smartphone, or allocating designated hours for checking your social media accounts. Sometimes one should take an occasional break from social media so that one can focus on his/her mental health and relationships.

One can also try the following tips:

We should plan a small get-togethers and interact with friends.

Make a routine to go out and do exercise

Find a place where we can help needy persons and do visit
Spend face-to-face time with a good friend and play with them
Spend time with nature and pets
Never take your gadgets in bed during sleep
Go for morning walk and increase your social circle
Explore your hobbies
Spend time in reading books
These are some tips that can be helpful.

Conclusion

As with the advancement of technology, the people are getting closer globally and one wants to be in touch with everyone and wants to know each and everything. One should realize that its not possible. It will lead to frustration and ill mental health . It is important for the parents to understand the impact of the overuse of social media on their kids. Parents should realize that the kids are overusing it and it may affect their mental and physical health in long run. Families should have regular discussions on how to use social media responsibly and safely, how can be reduced screen time, etc. When families navigate the world of social media together, the online world becomes much more manageable. Physical interaction can not be replaced with virtual one. We have to create a balance between these to lead a happy and healthy life.

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