

It's important to note that the new study only found an association between these social media habits and depression; it did not determine whether these behaviors contribute to depression, or whether people who already have depression are more likely to engage in these behaviors.

This isn't the first study to link social media use with symptoms of depression; a 2012 study from the University of Houston also found that time spent on Facebook is linked with depressive symptoms. In addition, a 2017 study found that spending more time on social media was linked with feeling socially isolated. And in December last year, Facebook said in a blogpost that certain types of social media use — such as "passively consuming information" on their site — has been linked with worse mental health, but other types of use, such as actively interacting with people, is linked with improvements in well-being.

Using lots of social media sites raises depression risk

We have sampled 200 young adults, ages 19 through 25, using a questionnaire to determine social media use and its impact. The questionnaires asked about the 10 most popular questions related to social media use.

It has been found that Participants who used 1 to 6 social media platforms had 3.1 times the odds of reporting higher levels of depressive symptoms than their counterparts who used zero to two platforms. Those who used the most platforms had 3.3 times the odds of high levels of anxiety symptoms than their peers who used the least number of platforms. The researchers controlled for other factors that may contribute to depression and anxiety, including race, gender, relationship status, household income, education and total time spent on social media.

Social media dramatically changed the way we communicate, socialize, and make and maintain friendships. While there are benefits to living in a digital world, there are also risks. Today's youth miss out on critical social skills development when they spend the majority of their free time connected to and interacting through a screen. They can also get lost in a world of unrealistic comparisons, cyberbullying, and feeling left out.

II. SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

The defining feature of a major depressive episode is a period of at least two weeks during which there is either depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure in nearly all activities. For children, you are more likely to see irritability than depressed mood. Other symptoms of depression can include the following:

- Feelings of hopelessness
- Loss of interest in normal daily activities
- Irritable mood
- Significant weight loss or weight gain
- Diminished self-care
- Insomnia or hypersomnia
- Psychomotor agitation or retardation
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Excessive guilt
- Difficulty concentrating

- Difficulty making decisions
- Physical complaints: headaches, stomach aches
- Social isolation
- Recurrent thoughts about death
- Suicidal thoughts, actions, or plans.

The symptoms of depression exhibited by teens are likely to negatively affect school performance (and even attendance), friendships, and family relationships. The tricky part about teen depression is that it can be gradual. Complaints of difficulty sleeping or frequent headaches seem age appropriate, and in many cases they are. They shouldn't happen regularly, though. When your typically active and social teen appears isolated, sad, and unreachable, it's time to get help.

CONCLUSION

The recommendation proposed to reduce or prevent the negative effects of social media is to focus on both the users and social media companies. These include warning young people when they have spent too much time on social media and implementing a mechanism which can identify young people who are showing signs of mental health issues on social media.

It might require safe social media use to be taught as part of a child's education, or a social media component to be included in the training of youth-workers and other professionals who engage with young people.

We should teach young people how to use technology better, rather than taking it away.

REFERENCES

- [1] HM Government/Department of Health. (2011) No health without mental health: A cross-government mental health outcomes strategy for people of all ages. London: Department of Health.
- [2] Tsai C, Shen P, Chiang Y. Meeting ex-partners on Facebook: users' anxiety and severity of depression. *Behaviour & Information Technology* 2015; 34:668-677.. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929X.2014.981585>
- [3] Blachnio A, Przepiórka A, Pantic I. Internet use, Facebook intrusion, and depression: Results of a cross-sectional study. *European Psychiatry* 2015; 30:681-684. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eurpsy.2015.04.002>
- [4] Feinstein BA, Hershenberg R, Bhatia V, Latack JA, Meuwly N, Davila J. Negative social comparison on Facebook and depressive symptoms: Rumination as a mechanism. *Psychology of Popular Media Culture* 2013; 2:161-170. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033111>
- [5] Lup K, Trub L, Rosenthal L. Instagram #instasad?: Exploring associations among Instagram use, depressive symptoms, negative social comparison, and strangers followed. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior And Social Networking* 2015; 18:247-252. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2014.0560>