Relationship between Social Media and Mental Health Problems

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Keywords	ABSTRACT
	Social media has become an indispensable aspect of young people's digital interactions, as they use it mostly for entertainment and communication purposes. Consequently, it has the potential to have both positive and negative effects on them. Deterioration in mental health is one of the side effects stemming from social media overuse. This study investigates the relationship between social media and mental health problems. The researcher recommends that social media users be cautious when interacting with social media features, especially likes, comments, followers, media, and posts, because of their significant effect on mental health. However, ethical social media use can expand opportunities for connection and conversation, as well as boost self-esteem, promote health, and gain access to critical medical information. Despite mounting evidence of social media's negative effects on adolescent mental health, there is still a scarcity of empirical research on how teens comprehend social media, particularly as a body of wisdom, or how they might employ wider modern media discourses to express themselves. Youth use cell phones and other forms of media in large numbers, resulting in chronic sleep loss, which has a negative influence on cognitive ability, school performance, and socio-emotional functioning. According to data from several cross-sectional, longitudinal, and empirical research, Smartphone and social media use among teenagers relates to an increase in mental distress, self-harming behaviours, and sociality. Clinicians can work with young people and their families to reduce the hazards of social media and smart phone usage by using open, nonjudgmental, and developmentally appropriate tactics, including education and practical problem-solving.

Introduction: Social media is commonly defined as a collective term for websites and applications that focus on communication, interaction, content-sharing, and collaboration (Rouse, 2020). In recent years there has been a rapid rise in the way communication, connection and sharing information happens on social media. Various platforms have been created and are being used for various purposes, the primary ones being

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. This digital transformation has also led to concerns about its potential impact on mental health. There is a relationship between social media and the well-being of an individual. There are both positive and negative effects of social media on well-being.

Social media, which is expanding rapidly day by day, is developing in different aspects. This social media affects the mental health and education of students in various ways and it is an urgent need to investigate. Although mental health has various definitions, it can be simply defined as emotional, mental, and social well-being. Each person is at a different mental level. Also, the way each person thinks, feels, and acts varies according to their mental level. Moreover, it also helps determine how a person deals with stress and interacts with others. It is widely accepted that mental health and mental wellbeing are essential to a happy, fulfilling, and meaningful life. (Thirunavurakasu et al, 2013). Research has shown that engaging in various forms of social media can improve communication, social relationships, and technical skills for children and young people. (Zheng, et al.,2020). Mental health problems can interfere with a student's energy level, concentration, confidence, mental ability and optimism, performance, and are associated with lower grades in academic subjects and dropping out of school. (American College Health Association, 2015). Also, excessive use of social media is similar to addiction (Hussain & Griffiths, 2021., Hussain & Starcevic, 2020). It is among the most common mental illnesses among young people with severe negative consequences such as anxiety, mood, attention, conduct disorders, and low self-esteem (deepaCheng et al, 2021., Lebni et al,2020., O'reilly et al, 2018). Without early diagnosis and treatment, children with mental disorders can have problems at home, at school, and with friendships. Mental disorders can interfere with a child's healthy development and are associated with problems in adulthood. Adolescent mental health problems often go hand-in-hand with other health and behavioral risks, such as an increased risk of drug use, experiencing violence, and engaging in high-risk sex that can lead to HIV, STDs, and unintended pregnancy. (Haddad et al., 2021). Incorporating social media can be a challenging instructional strategy because it seeks to balance pedagogical authority with active student participation. Collaboration through social media supports creativity. Social media provides a platform to gain extensive knowledge about a subject, making it easier for students to pursue their studies. (Kelleher and Stevens, 2009). As a result, students and educators become equal participants in the knowledge-sharing process. Although this has many advantages, it facilitates cyber-piracy, abuse, and cyber-harassment. (Chen & Bryer, 2012; Frye et al., 2010; Jackson, 2011; Smailes & Gannon-Leary, 2011). To avoid it, it is imperative to establish standards and have proper guidelines for the use of social media.

The Positive Effects

1. Social Support- Social media has found to be useful in connecting with friends, family and people across vast distances. In the case of mental health, people undergoing some mental health issues such as anxiety, and depression, often find it useful to connect with the right professionals who can help them or connect with people with similar experiences virtually. Research suggests that maintaining online social connections can have a positive impact on overall mental health (Kross et al., 2013).

2. Awareness and Education: Social media platforms often provide valuable information about mental health. These platforms are used at various levels to provide awareness and fight against stigma linked with mental health issues.

3. Expression and Creativity: Sharing personal experiences, creativity and work is often empowering and helps to boost self-esteem. It hence has a positive impact on mental well-being. Studies have indicated that engaging in creative activities can reduce stress and improve mood (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

The Negative Effects

1.Addiction and Time Consumption: Social media is designed to grab the attention of users and as a result, it can lead to excessive time spent on screen. The effect of increased screen time are varied; ranging from

disturbance in sleep, ignoring real-life relationships leading to isolation, affecting physical health and lifestyle and reduced self-esteem.

2.Comparison and Envy: One of the most significant negative impacts of social media is the tendency for users to engage in social comparison. There are feelings of inadequacy that can also cause low self-esteem, anxiety and depression. A study by Chou and Edge (2012) found that increased social comparison on Facebook led to decreased self-esteem.

3. Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying is also known as online bullying. It occurs on digital platforms such as social media. The impact of cyberbullying can lead to severe consequences such as stress, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, isolation and loneliness.

4. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO): It is mainly the compulsion to check feeds as a consequence of anxiety associated with the fear of missing out on things on social media. It can lead to disturbed sleep, lower life satisfaction, decreased mood and restlessness. This affects overall mental well-being.

The Moderating Factors

Several factors influence the relationship between social media and mental health:

1. Age and Vulnerability: Adolescents and young adults are considered to be more vulnerable to the negative effects of social media as they are still developing their self-identity. They are more prone to experience cyberbullying, social comparison and isolation as compared to other populations.

2. Individual Resilience: Every individual differs in the way they cope with any stressor. An individual's resilience and personal attitude might play a significant role in being able to cope with the stressors of social media. Strong social support, self-esteem and effective coping skills are a few factors to enhance resilience.

To mitigate the negative impact of social media, individuals can:

- Set limit to usage to avoid excessive screen time.
- Following informative, positive and supportive content can be helpful.
- Self-awareness to recognize how the negative effects of social media affect mental well-being.
- Encouraging digital literacy and learning about cyberbullying, online etiquette and safety.
- Seeking help and support when facing cyberbullying or other mental health challenges. Mental health professionals can provide valuable assistance.
- Building resilience and building real-life support systems and connections.

Conclusion

The impact of social media on mental health is complex and an evolving issue. There are several positives and negatives associated with the impact of social media on the mental well-being of an individual. It is essential to acknowledge the potential negative impacts, learn to mitigate them and also to seek help from a mental health professional when needed.

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