

The Complex Relationship Between Social Media and Health

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Abstract

This article presents a series of issues related to the topic of the reciprocal relationship between health and social media. The research questions and provided arguments consider the benefits and negative effects of social media use in terms of health. The main argument is that it has had both effects on people and provided both opportunities and threats in that realm, emphasizing that further research is needed. The author's personal experiences and opinions are used to support the argument and show that messages can be spread quickly and create both positive and negative responses on social media. People have been using it for both purposes, raising awareness about mental health, and distress and sharing misinformation and promoting idealized lifestyles. The research questions are rather relevant and can be helpful in defining the future goals of further research in terms of the negative and positive side effects of social media use on mental and physical health. The main insights are related to the fact that social media can be used both for good by raising awareness about certain diseases, sharing information, and creating virtual online health communities and for intruding into private lives and spreading anxiety, depression, or sleep disorders. Balancing social media use with other activities and a critical approach to that could be a solution to both understanding and using it for one's benefits, suggesting an approach to further research.

Keywords: Social media, health, misinformation, online health, Metropolitan Region.

Social media changed the way we communicate, share information and how we perceive our surroundings. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and newer platforms like TikTok are reshaping the way we interact with our friends as well as how they form part of essential news consumption experiences that shape self-perception, Yet the general adoption of social media holds a small number of health consequences. By reviewing recent studies and expert opinion, this article explores the nuanced relationship between social media use and health outcomes.

Positive Effects of Social Media on Health

Raising Mental Health Awareness: The Bell Let's Talk and Mental Health Awareness Month campaigns are spreading the message of mental health care to wider similarly highlighting the

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importance of caring for your mental well-being while promoting society in which people should seek help where needed. The increasing popularity of social media has also helped in raising awareness and reducing the stigma around mental health. Celebrities, influencers and just regular people are all coming up with their mental health struggles opening some conversations we had not been where open to talking about such as depression anxiety puts. Social media may be instrumental in reducing mental illness stigma and promoting help seeking behaviors. Social media may be able to substantially reduce the stigma of mental illness and help in people seeking appropriate professional assistance.

Encourage Communities: For those dealing with mental health, chronic medical illness or any other obstacles to good physical and emotional wellness I know social media is one of their only forms of support - it provides a space they can feel well in communities. Through online communities and support groups on websites such as Facebook and Reddit people can share stories, ask for advice and even get emotional support. Those who find They are either stigmatized or isolated in real life may probably benefit the most from this. Research has shown that participating in online health communities can lead to various types of improvements, including better health outcomes and increased self-efficacy.

Information and Education on Health: Social media platforms are valuable for health information and education. They bring a platform of healthcare providers, Organizations as well Public health authorities to move the important information in an efficient way on Health. In the case of, for instance, COVID-19 pandemic social media played an important role in notifying people about symptoms and vaccine news along with precautions. Research reveals that social media can improve public health communication and then also increase individual knowledge back at home, promoting positive behavior modifications.

Social Media's Harmful Effects on Health

Health anxiety and false information: The problem of disseminating false information on social media is a serious one because it presents health risks. Publicias SAC / Public HealthAgency of Canada Misinformation about diseases, treatments and vaccines can cause anxiety and needlessly inspire false hope or panic, leading to poor health choices. In the COVID-19 pandemic, misinformation about the virus and vaccines spread far and wide which greatly detracted from efforts to stop its transmission as well it created significant health anxiety. In a study by Wang et al. According to Baseman et al. (2019), the spread of health false information is largely related, but not limited, due to social media effects for which regulation and public awareness should be reinforced.

Problems with Mental Health: Social media can both create awareness about mental health and run problems around it in a much feeblar way. An ordinary, unexciting life can become a source of depression and low self-esteem if it is only exposed to the highly-curated idealized lives people chose to share with us. For example, research has found that young adults and adolescents who use it the most are more likely to be lonely, feel depressed or anxious (Lin et al., 2016). Contrasting one's life with the idealistic images often present on social media may amplify feelings of "social media envy."

Addiction and Disorders of Sleep: Facebook, Instagram and other platforms are gaining a stronger hold over human ardor than alcohol caused by protestors spending longer hours on them thereby at risk to their physical & mental state. Social media addiction affects interpersonal relationships, sleep patterns and productivity. Research by Andreassen et al., for instance, has associated sleep problems, stress and overall symptoms of reduced wellbeing with social media use disorder [3]. (2016). The blue light from your screen can also interfere with melatonin production, making it harder for you to fall asleep.

Cyberstalking and Virtual Assaults: Social media platforms enable anonymity and the fact that they are so easily accessible make way for things like cyberbullying to become more of a commonality. This behaviour could contribute to the mental and emotional health problems of their victims. Especially for teens, cyberbullying leads to feeling high levels of stress, anxiety and sorrow that further gets extended up till thoughts revolving around suicide. Mental health implications of cyberbullying have been clearly demonstrated by victims like those studied in Kowalski et al. 2014 and thus providing humane support systems quickly is direly needed fixes to serve the greater good.

Balancing Social Media Use to Improve Health:

The balance between the benefits of social media to health and its adverse impacts is important. Some suggestions for a healthier use of social media include:

Putting Your Feed in Order: Be selective in who you follow and the sort of content to engage with (this one decision can greatly impact your mental health). As any expert will tell you, one of the keys to a healthy environment online is simply not following accounts that make us feel bad, and only following things meaning promote optimism, healthiness oriented or well-being.

Conscientious Use: Using Mindful Social Media It's certainly a very mindful social media strategy right from the heart. Setting time limits, turning off notifications, and taking breaks will help with using it less impact-fully on your mental health.

Taking Part in Offline Activities: It is equally important to maintain a balance between offline and online activities for better health outcomes. Activities such as exercise, different hobbies and real-life connections can be a good outlet to get away from social media some more that will keep you fit mentally and physically.

Analytical reasoning and confirmation: Yes, votes matter for misinformation (one of the most crucial aspects is critical thinking and verifying whatever we hear before passing it along. By leaning on informative sources, doubling down with data and staying vigilant against the wolves of fear-mongering headlines, you can help quell some fears or slow any future blooming panic while promoting public safety.

Getting Expert Assistance: If your use of social media is damaging your mental health-go talk to a therapist/ counselor and deal with it. Therapists can also work with you to establish healthier behavior around social media and potentially the factors leading up to addiction as well.

To sum up, the nature of the relationship between social media and health is intricate and multifaceted – represented by great opportunities as well as tall mountains to climb. Concerning the use of social media, the platforms have thus far been beneficial in terms of how one can learn more about health. One might use the resources of these platforms to connect to healthcare professionals and nonprofit organizations and learn about one's medical problem. There is an opportunity to spend time sharing one's own story about the specific health issue. The connectedness developed in this manner can also spawn the sharing of various health practices and tools – in other words, a melting pot of ideas helpful for raising mental health awareness, creating support groups for those in need, and encouraging healthy behaviors of others.

The advantages of social media are apparent, but they are not all good for health. As such platforms are prevalent, a vast array of issues like body image concerns, anxiety disorders, fake news and other problems have become more common and sometimes even severe. We have to face what we see on the screen day by day, namely the lives of people unsatisfied with their

routine yet ‘successful’ and attractive beyond humanly possible standards due to professional editing and careful selection of photographs. Such situations can have a negative impact on both mental and physical health of individuals who regularly encounter instances of cyber bullying and social comparison. The result is stress.

We must swim this giant pool of platforms, documents with a critical point-of-view, and discrepancy in media literacy in customers. The optimal strategy to reduce the cons of social media and boost the pros are a responsible approach to using them, the promotion of evidence-based health knowledge – developed by both conventional and contemporary types of scholarly analysis – and the development of nurturing online communication environments. Thus, it is possible to facilitate agreement and quality in everyday social media usage and adopt it as a helpful instrument to improve health. To do so, healthcare practitioners should join forces with educators and policy makers and ensure the leverage of social media opportunities as a glass half-full in health. The glass half-empty should be discarded, as it leads to false pretenses and the exploitation of desperate people who strive to leverage the opportunities of health aides who to their first and last extent to be harmful in their use. Lastly, the connection between social media and health can be seen as reciprocal and developing, a topic for further research. By comprehending and mastering it, we will be able to avoid the cons of social media usage and make use of its pros to maximize health outcomes worldwide in the digital age.

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