

THE MOST COMMON NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF EXCESSIVE SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF TEENAGERS.

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REVIEW ARTICLE

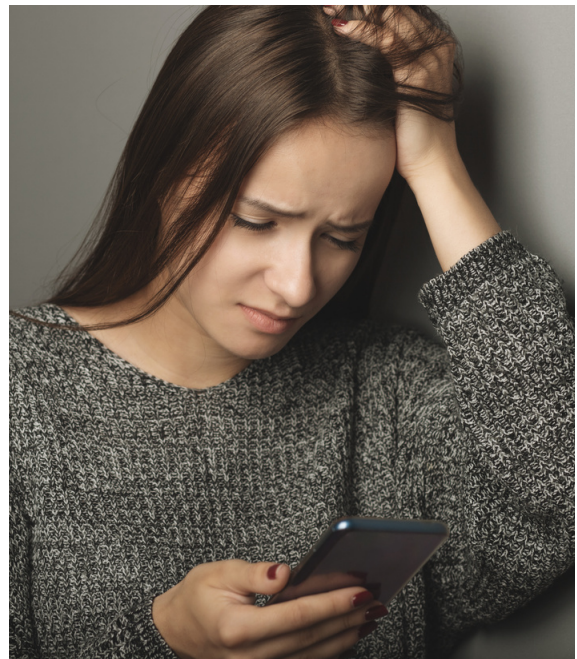
Introduction

In today's digital age, social media has become an integral part of many teenagers' lives. Moreover, adolescence is the stage of life where well-being shows the most fluctuations, where risk-taking is at its peak, and where mental disorders such as depression often emerge (Valkenburg et al., 2022).

These platforms offer opportunities for connectivity, social interaction, and access to real-time information. However, alongside the evident benefits, concerns have arisen about the potential negative effects of excessive social media use on the mental health of adolescents.

As research in this field has progressed, a body of evidence has accumulated, suggesting that prolonged and unregulated use of social media can have detrimental consequences for the psychological well-being of young people, including higher levels of anxiety, depression (Rodríguez Puentes and Fernández Parra 2014), as well as self-esteem issues. This review article will examine the most common negative effects of excessive social media use on the mental health of teenagers, providing an overview of the most relevant findings and highlighting the importance of addressing this issue from an informed and preventive perspective.

By understanding the potential impacts of social media on the mental health of adolescents, we can encourage a more conscious and balanced use of these platforms, thereby promoting the overall well-being of this vulnerable population.



Development and Discussion

The excessive use of social media among teenagers raises significant concerns regarding potential negative effects on their mental health. Through a comprehensive literature review, relevant studies were explored to examine the most common effects of excessive social media use on the mental health of adolescents.

To conduct this thorough literature review, various sources of academic and scientific information were consulted. Databases such as PsycINFO, Google Scholar, Dialnet, and ScienceDirect were utilized to search for pertinent articles on the subject. These platforms provide access to a wide range of scientific journals, empirical studies, and literature reviews, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the most relevant research in the field.

Development and Discussion

One of the prominent areas of concern highlighted in the literature is the influence of social media on the development of eating disorders during adolescence. The article by Villar del Saz Bedmar and Baile Ayensa (2023) revealed that social media can act as a risk factor in the development of eating disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia nervosa.

Constant exposure to images and messages related to extreme thinness and the pursuit of physical perfection can influence adolescents' distorted perception of body image, which, in turn, can trigger disordered eating behaviors. This is because there is continuous exposure to one's own image and feedback from other users, which increases the perceived level of demand regarding physical appearance (Bardona-Cone and Cass, 2007 cited in Villar del Saz Bedmar and Baile Ayensa 2023).

Furthermore, several studies have examined the relationship between excessive social media use and mental health problems in adolescents. Flynn, Mote, and Morse (2022) found that constant exposure to negative content on social media, such as cyberbullying, social comparison, and pressure to gain online approval, can increase the risk of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and reduced life satisfaction.



In connection with this, the study by Gracia Granados et al., (2020) revealed that emotional regulation plays a significant role in problematic social media use among adolescents. Adolescents with depressive symptoms are more likely to turn to social media as a form of escape or distraction, which can lead to increased problematic use and have a negative impact on their mental health. They propose that "an assessment of emotional regulation levels and depressive symptoms could serve as antecedents to identify adolescents more prone to problematic social media use."

The influence of social media on self-esteem has also been a subject of research. Osa Callejero et al., (2021) found that excessive use of Instagram and constant comparison with idealized images of others can negatively impact adolescents' self-esteem, increasing the risk of body and emotional dissatisfaction. Another important aspect is the relationship between social media usage time and mental health. Rodríguez Puentes and Fernández Parra, (2014) found that excessive social media use, especially during nighttime hours, was associated with higher levels of anxiety, depression, and stress in Colombian adolescents.

Other studies focus on specific aspects, such as the impact of social media on beauty perception and the development of body dysmorphic disorders (Laughter et al., 2023), as well as the relationship between digital engagement and depression in adolescents (Layte et al., 2023). Additionally, the psychology of addictive smartphone behavior in young adults has been investigated, relating it to problematic use, social anxiety, and depressive stress (Pera, 2020). The relationships between social media platforms and loneliness and anger in adolescents have also been studied (Sarman and Tuncay, 2023). These studies, along with others of a similar nature, have provided a strong foundation for better understanding the effects of social media on the mental health of adolescents.

Conclusion and Summary:

In summary, the comprehensive literature review on the effects of excessive social media use on the mental health of adolescents reveals several significant concerns. Adolescents are in a crucial stage of development where their emotional well-being can be particularly vulnerable, and prolonged and unregulated use of social media can have detrimental consequences.

Firstly, it has been found that social media can influence the development of eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia nervosa. Constant exposure to images and messages related to extreme thinness and the pursuit of physical perfection can distort adolescents' body image perception, leading to disordered eating behaviors.

Furthermore, excessive social media use has been associated with mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and decreased life satisfaction. Constant exposure to negative content, such as cyberbullying and social comparison, can increase the risk of developing these disorders.

Emotional regulation also plays a significant role in problematic social media use. Adolescents with depressive symptoms are more likely to turn to social media as a means of escape or distraction, which can have a negative impact on their mental health.

Adolescents' self-esteem is also affected by excessive social media use. Constant comparison with idealized images of others on platforms like Instagram can lead to body and emotional dissatisfaction.

The duration of social media use has also been shown to be related to the mental health of adolescents. Excessive use, especially during nighttime hours, has been associated with higher levels of anxiety, depression, and stress.

These findings highlight the importance of addressing the issue of social media use from an informed and preventive perspective. It is crucial to promote a more conscious and balanced use of these platforms, thereby fostering the overall well-being of adolescents. The studies reviewed in this research provide a solid foundation for understanding the effects of social media on the mental health of adolescents and underscore the need to address this issue responsibly and effectively, including education and awareness about the negative effects of excessive social media use, teaching healthy digital skills for responsible use, and involving families and educators in monitoring and setting boundaries.



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