

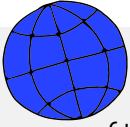
# A Systematic Review of Social Media and its Impact on Mental Health

## Health



## Results

## Purpose



Social media has become one of the most significant influences in the lives of Americans. Research estimates that over 4.76 billion people worldwide use social media, and adolescents represent the largest group of social media users (Datareportal, 2023). Social media's impact has been extensively researched in the past (e.g. Twenge, 2020, Ahmed, 2021, and Griffith, 2021). Most research has either looked at a specific impact of social media, such as depression or addiction, or has focused on one platform (Facebook or Twitter). Most of the research seems to indicate that social media has a troublesome influence on our lives.

The current study represents a comprehensive review of social media platforms and its impact on mental health. Given that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on our mental health as well as increased our usage of social media, the research question is whether the impact on mental health is positive or negative. The goal is to review the literature from a broad perspective and determine whether social media has a more positive or negative impact on mental health.

## Methods



The search engines of PsycInfo and Academic Search complete were used for a review of the literature. The search terms "social media" and "mental health" were used. Studies from the last ten years were included in the process. Non-english speaking samples were excluded. A total of 34 studies were reviewed and included if they met the criteria of addressing mental health attributes.

This study investigated the potential effects of social media on the mental health of a large number of Americans, who use it regularly. After assessing 34 articles, we established that the relationship between social media and mental health is complex. Our results signified that utilizing social media such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook could be damaging to one's mental wellbeing, especially in adolescents. Some of our key findings were as follows:

- The amount of time invested in social media can be linked to greater probabilities of exhibiting self-harming behaviors, depressive symptoms, and anxiety disorders than those experienced with gaming
- Utilizing social media can often times result in heightened vulnerability to negative stimuli and self-perceived inadequacy
- Investing too much time and energy in social media can adversely affect one's job performance and result in an emotional burnout.
- With the start of the pandemic, an addiction to social media has become more prevalent, and the repercussions can be seen in one's mental health and academic achievements
- Social media is highly addictive and exposes us to toxic behaviors, like cyberbullying, which have detrimental effects on our emotional wellbeing
- The online community has become increasingly supportive of those suffering from depression and anxiety, but there has also been a rise in prejudice against people with bipolar disorder and other forms of mental illness.

After conducting an in-depth review of the literature, it became clear that social media and the Internet could also be used to enhance the well-being of adolescents. Not only could these resources provide useful sources of information and advice, but it also was deemed a safe space for those struggling to find a support system.