Does excessive use of social media negatively affects teens' health?

Introduction

Social media is a controversial topic in today's society. It is something most children, teens, and adults use all the time. If someone were to ask: what is the first thing you do upon waking up? Wash your face? Eat breakfast? Get dressed? Actually, for most teens, the correct answer is that they check on their phone first. Why is that the reason? It is because they are unhappy about themselves and that they are anxious that others are having a better life. According to Pew Research Center, Jingjing Jiang conducts a survey in 2018 stating that " 44% of teens check their phone as soon as they wake up." (" How Teens and Parents Navigate Screen Time and Distractions" Web.)

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, social media is regarded as " forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content." (Merriam-Webster, 2019) It is a convenient way for people to interact with people on their phones. Some popular social media platforms nowadays are Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and more platforms which tend to be addictive.

Today, social media can be used as a beneficial way of changing people's lives by building communities and enhancing their connectivity, but what if social media is used excessively? Most people forget that the positive side of social media can come as negative. The frequent use of social media platforms can do more harm than good. Excessive use of social media negatively affects teens because it causes them to feel lonely, leading to

more sadness than happiness, that it causes sedentary behaviors that lead to physical health risks, and that it becomes controlling, leading to death.

Three principal reasons why excessive use of social media negatively affect teens' health

The first reason excessive use of social media negatively affects teens' health is that it causes teens to feel lonely, leading to more sadness than happiness. A survey quoted in an article shows that people who invested more energy on social media felt lonelier than those who invested less time connected with social media. (Ali, " Is Social Media Making You Lonely?" Web.) For example, when a person is at a social event and spontaneously check notifications, it causes a feeling of isolation with others at the social event. This is why the accessibility of phones may make a person connect more in the digital area, but disconnect from society, making them feel lonely. According to Erik Peper, an Associate Professor of Health Education at San Francisco State University, he made a study of 135 people and found out that individuals who use their phones more than usual were bound to be nervous, discouraged, and desolate. (Peper, " Is Social Media Making You Lonely?" Web.) A person may be worried to see what other people's lives look like and how it compares to one's own life. He or she may go on Instagram and watch all the fun everyone is having, where it feels like a connection, while the person may feel excluded. The photos of wonderful vacations, good relationships, and other fun events causes a fear of missing out, which may cause mental health issues such as anxiety and depression. The person may wonder why he or she does not have the fun, which makes them think that his or her life is empty and boring. He or she may feel

unhappy and anxious that others are having a better life. Researchers have also found some effects fear of missing out have on people's lives. According to a scholarly journal, researchers found that individuals with an abnormal level of fear of missing out were bound to give in to the temptation of checking instant messages and e-mails, were bound to get distracted in class, and had mixed feelings about their social media use. (University of Essex, " Do You Fear You Are Missing Out?" Web.) This shows how excessive use of social media negatively affects people's well-being.

The second reason excessive use of social media negatively affects teens' health is that it causes sedentary behaviors, leading to physical health issues. The term sedentary behavior is any behavior that is characterized by an energy expenditure for less than 1. 5 METs. Two authors wrote a book *Sedentary Behavior and Health: Concepts, Assessments, and Interventions* which states that " 13- to 18-year-old social media users report an average of 2. 07 hours per day." (Zhu and Owen 59) It has been explicit earlier that the accessibility of phones might create a personal connect a lot of within the digital space, but disconnect from society. Because of this, a person might stay indoors most of the time, leading to a sedentary lifestyle. Leading a sedentary lifestyle is a health problem that is becoming widespread without being affected by many illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and some types of cancer. (Kandola, " What are the consequences of a sedentary lifestyle?" Web.) As a matter of fact, a study conducted years ago found out those who have an excessive screen time use were " 50 percent more likely to die." (Harding, " Too much TV time may hurt your heart" Web.) Another way how immoderate use of social media

affects a person's physical health is that it leads to sleep problems. Melatonin, a hormone that controls the sleep-wake cycle is disrupted from the overuse of social media. For instance, the light produced by the screens prevents the production of melatonin, which makes a person difficult to fall asleep and sleep well. (Nucilli, " 11 Ways Social Media Is Ruining Your Physical and Mental Health" Web.) Leading a sedentary lifestyle can also " reduce metabolism and impair the body's ability to control blood sugar levels, regulate blood pressure, and break down fat." (Kandola, " What are the consequences of a sedentary lifestyle?" Web.) This explains how the increase in social media use contributes to a dangerous, sedentary lifestyle.

The last reason excessive use of social media negatively affect teens' health is that it can become controlling, and could lead to death. There are two ways that death can occur from the excessive use of social media: attention-seeking and suicidal. A person seeking attention is normal, but seeking attention on social media use is abnormal behavior. Most teens today would post pictures about the fun adventures they have, but ignore the dark side of their lives. This causes others to believe that they always have an amazing life, even though those pictures do not describe the reality of their lives. Teens would have an obsession with getting enough " likes" and " views" but not enjoying the photo itself. As a result of social media, it's all about numbers. The greater the number, the more significant you think you are. (Muehlbauer, " Social Media Is Controlling Our Lives" Web.) Even when nobody comments on their photos, they would have a feeling that nobody cares about them. They would stress so much about not getting enough attention and therefore, they think it is better to harm themselves. This

demonstrates the idea that not getting the attention teens to need on social media causes them to feel unimportant. Social media can become controlling in these times. Teens are copying other people's behaviors and actions based on what is posted on social media. For example, a number of people were reported dead in 2014 while performing the ice bucket challenge. Some people who attempted this challenge were declared dead due to some serious injuries. After knowing about the accident, people express their concerns about the safety of performing the ice bucket challenge. This shows how extreme use of social media can become controlling, leading to death.

Counter-arguments

Opponents may believe that frequent use of social media allows teens to connect with others and meet new friends. They would expect that people on social media would become their friends for life. If they go by the common statement " a friend in need is a friend indeed," that may not be a good idea. The reason is that " online friends cannot come to help you and would also not offer any emotional support." (Harankhedkar, " Is Making Friends Online Good Or Bad?" Web.) It is not safe to make friends online. For example, if a person receives a friend request from a stranger, the person can get negative rationales behind them. If the person adds friends with people they do not know, there will be many negative outcomes. That person may think that some random stranger friended them, which means they are sociable, although this is uncertain. Also, when people connect with their friends online, they might not be true " friends." Those " friends" may bully others online instead of at school. A study found out that a person's friend cyberbullies them several times greater than people they have never been

friends with. (Fowler, " Youth cyberbullying most common among current or former friends and dating partners" Web.)

Another counter-argument is that social media helps students do better at school. It is true that social media can have a positive influence on education such as a motivation for LMS use, attentiveness to written text and reading, and distance learning opportunities. For example, some students reported that social media platforms such as Instagram or Facebook help strengthens learning and is a motivation for students. (Fox, " Social Media and Education: Using Social Media For Better Academic Results" Web.) However, some students may become addicted, which may cause a distraction, which may negatively impact their learning. For instance, research shows that pupils who endlessly log on to social media platforms, routinely post messages and pictures and invest a great deal of energy there have somewhat lower grades." (" Is social media to blame for poor grades?" Web.) Also, some students reported that social media helps them at school socially by making friends and to build a connection with them, decreasing their chance of dropping out. This may not work for some people. A " friend" a person makes online is not really a friend. Therefore, it is dangerous to meet others a person never talk to in person. Opponents may say that social media builds attentiveness to written text and reading. Sure, students may prefer reading all sorts of information on the web instead of written text because they want other sources that interest them the most. It is fine for students to moderately use the web to read information, but students with excessive use of screen time are " 50 percent more likely to die." (Harding, " Too much TV time may hurt your heart" Web.)

The last counter-argument is that excessive use of social media benefits mental health. People may believe that social media is a way to have a connection with the world, making teens feel less isolating. (D'Arcy-Sharpe, " The Benefits Of Social Media On Mental Health" Web.) Although social media gives a chance for people to communicate with others, making them feel less isolated, they can compare themselves to others, which leads to jealousy and competition. The disadvantage of teens communicating with others is that it decreases real existence, face-to-face connections, which are crucial for forming relationships. The people teens follow or talk to on social media can compare themselves because they are negatively influenced by what others post. The image teens comparing to is believed to be genuine, even though people in these times edit their photos to change their own resemblance. (Ehmke, " How Using Social Media Affects Teenagers" Web.) This is an example of how social media tricks our mind into knowing the reality side of others' image. Therefore, social comparisons can negatively affect our mental health, causing depression and anxiety.

Conclusion

Overall, the continuous usage of social media continues to be harmful to teens. Excessive use of social media has negatively affected teens' health. It causes them to feel lonely, leading to more sadness than happiness, that it causes sedentary behaviors that lead to physical health risks, and that it becomes controlling, leading to death.

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