Social Media & Mental Health

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There Are No Disclosures
Goals

- Provide an overview of social media use among adults and children
- Address common concerns about negative impact of social media on mental health
- Provide strategies for talking with families about social media
- Q & A

Introduction

In a growing world where technology has become a necessary source of communication, special attention must be placed on the potential hazards of social media to physical and mental health.
This is Social Media:

Most of Us Are Connected in Some Way . . .

77% of Americans Own Smartphones
73% of Americans Own a Desktop or Laptop Computer
53% of Americans Own a Tablet

Source: Pew Research Center (2018)
For the Love of Smartphones

Americans increasingly use smartphones for more than voice calls, texting

% of U.S. smartphone owners ages 18 and over who have ever used their phone to ...

- Get directions, recommendations, other info related to your location
- Listen to an online radio/music service, e.g. Pandora or Spotify
- Participate in a video call or chat
- Watch movies or TV through a paid subscription service, e.g. Netflix or Hulu Plus

How much is too much?

- Smartphone ownership is nearly ubiquitous: 95% of teens now report they have a smartphone or access to one
- Mobile connections are fueling more-persistent online activities: 45% of teens now say they are online on a near-constant basis
  - Half of teenage girls (50%) are near-constant online users, compared with 39% of teenage boys
Differences in Media Preferences by Gender

• Boys' and girls' media preferences are very different:
  • Teen boys average 56 minutes a day playing video games, compared to girls' seven minutes
  • Teen girls spend 40 minutes more a day than boys on social media (1:32 vs. 52 minutes).
Child/Adolescent Media Use

- The average child in America spends more time consuming electronic media than going to school:
  - Teens use an average of nine hours of entertainment media per day, and tweens use an average of six hours, not including time spent using media for school or homework.
  - Of that, tweens average more than four and a half hours of screen media use a day and teens more than six and a half hours.
- Aided by the convenience and constant access provided by mobile devices, especially smartphones, 92% of teens report going online daily,
  - 24% say they go online “almost constantly,” according to a study from Pew Research Center.

How Technology Affects Sleep

According to a National Sleep Foundation Study...

- 95% of individuals surveyed reported using electronics in the hour before they went to sleep
- 15% of 19-64 year olds get less than 6 hours of sleep on weeknights
- 95% of 18-29 year olds sleep with their phone right next to their bed
- 50% of individuals will check their phone immediately if they wake in the night
- 10% of people are woken up regularly by cells, texts, or emails

Source: Stampler (2014)
Technology & Physical Health: Eating Habits

- Most buying decisions about what to have for dinner happen 2 hours before mealtime.
- Most Millennials learn to cook from YouTube – not from their mother.
- At least 2 out of 3 daily meals are now eaten alone; while online.
- Most households who do eat together often eat different meals according to taste preferences.

Source: Barber (2013)

“Social media has changed the way people interact. In many ways, social media has led to positive changes in the way people communicate and share information. However, it has a dark side as well. Social networking can sometimes result in negative outcomes, some with long-term consequences.”
Social Media’s Impact on Mental Health

Vito Pilieci (The National Post Reporter) argued:

“In an age when internet devices are always on, meeting face-to-face is becoming increasingly rare as people choose to meet screen-to-screen...What is this new dynamic doing to normal social interaction? How do these devices and social media services, such as Facebook, affect the way we socialize and communicate with each other? But, more than that, what impact do these social networks have on their user’s mental health?”
The Advantages

Social media has many advantages:

- Having the ability to connect with people
- Staying in touch with friends and family who are far away
- Having the freedom to communicate whenever and wherever
- Research & education
- Raising awareness
- Fundraising/Charity

The Negative Effects of Social Media

Sousley, 2013
Negative Effects: Health Problems Associated With Social Media

- **Increase Risk of Obesity:**
  - Sedentary lifestyle, increased time spent social networking.

- **Eating Disorders:**
  - Whilst the portrayal of "ideal" body types in western media has long been recognized as a factor in propagating eating disorders, current research has been examining the role of social media in the triggering and spreading of the diseases. Research has shown that eating disorders can be transmitted "like a virus" through social networks.

- **Mental Health Disorders:**
  - Daily overuse of social media has a negative effect on children’s health making them prone to psychological disorders such as attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders, anxiety and depression.

- **Sleep Disorders:**
  - Medical experts attest that school aged children are afflicted with sleep disorders because of elevated social media usage. In turn, these sleep disorders severely affect the children’s ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle and impedes their ability to perform well in school.

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Negative Effects of Social Media

- A false sense of connection
- Isolation/Loneliness
- Mental health effects
- Broken relationships, infidelity and torn families
- Encourages poor grammar, usage, and spelling
- Harm to ones reputation
- Exposing children to online predators
- Exposure to cyber bullying
- Suicide
Negative Effects of Social Media (cont.)

- Invasion of privacy
- Exposure to scams, identity theft, hackers, fraud, and virus attacks
- Time consuming
- Poor school performance
- Increased distraction
- Decreased productivity/ Loss of job
- Possibility of addiction disorder
- Increased risk of obesity
- Increased risk of sleep disorders

Negatives Effects: Brain Development

- Excessive use of screens could harm the physical development of young people’s brains.
  - Correlation between too much screen time and worse attention spans, as well as negative effects on learning.
  - One study conducted with young mice demonstrated that repeated exposure to flashing sounds and lights that mimic screen time led to development of fewer nerve cells in the parts of the brain that control learning and memory
    - The same stimulus doesn’t affect brains of adult mice
  - In another study, researchers divided preschoolers into two groups
    - Half watched fast-paced images on screens for about 10 minutes
    - Half drew with crayons in another room
    - All the kids took the same test of cognitive skills → Those who were exposed to the screens did significantly worse on the exams
- Our current fast-paced digital media, from flash games and online videos, to social media feeds and constant texting, seems to tire the brain. This has major implications for kids and how they reach their full academic potential.
Negative Effects: Sleep Deprivation

Sleeping less than 7 hours is linked to an increased risk of:

- Diabetes
- Stroke
- High Blood Pressure
- Heart Disease
- Obesity
- Poor Mental Health
- Early Death

Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2016)

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Negative Effects: Social & Emotional Health

Negative Impacts of Social Media:

- **53% of participants** said social media sites changed their behaviors
- **51% of participants** of the same study state that a negative change was made
- **2/3 of participants** reported difficulty relaxing and sleeping after they used the sites
- **55% of participants** reported feeling “worried or uncomfortable” when they weren’t able to log onto their social media accounts

Negative Effects: Mental Health

Doctor Larry Rosen over a period of time has studied and researched the mental health effects of social media on individuals. He claims:

“Earlier studies reported more negative findings such as young adults with a strong Facebook presence tended towards narcissism, antisocial tendencies, and aggression. Overuse was identified as causing anxiety and depression. Excessive use of social media was also linked to poorer achievement at school.”

Negative Effects: Mental Health (cont.)

Social media has become a dangerous pastime for individuals suffering from depression, anxiety, suicidal tendencies, and other mental health issues.
Negative Effects: A False Sense of Connection

According to Cornell University’s Steven Strogatz, “Social media sites can make it more difficult for us to distinguish between the meaningful relationships we foster in the real world, and the numerous casual relationships formed through social media. By focusing so much of our time and psychic energy on these less meaningful relationships, our most important connections, he fears, will weaken.”

What Do Teens Think About the Effects of Social Media?

Teens have mixed views on social media’s effect on people their age....

- Many say it helps them connect with others
- Some express concerns about bullying
“[Social media] allows us to communicate freely and see what everyone else is doing. [It] gives us a voice that can reach many people.” (Boy, age 15)

“[Teens] would rather go scrolling on their phones instead of doing their homework, and it’s so easy to do so. It’s just a huge distraction.” (Boy, age 17)

“It provides a fake image of someone’s life. It sometimes makes me feel that their life is perfect when it is not.” (Girl, age 15)

Negative Effects: Social Comparison and Self-Esteem

Social Networking Sites provide the perfect platform for meticulous self-presentation. Users can selectively allow content onto their profiles, post pictures, and describe themselves in ways that best represent their ideal self-views.

Participants who used Facebook most often had poorer trait self-esteem, and this was mediated by greater exposure to upward social comparisons on social media.

Vogel, Rose, Roberts, & Eckles, 2014
Social-Comparison Theory

The theory explains how individuals evaluate their own opinions and abilities by comparing themselves to others in order to reduce uncertainty in these domains, and learn how to define the self.

Downward Social Comparison

Upward Social Comparison

Festinger, 1954

Negative Effects: Cyberbullying: Yik Yak, Ask.fm, Burnbook (only website right now)

Though many apps have improved their monitoring and reporting features, cyberbullying is still a reality. It can happen on any social media app, but some have a notorious mean streak. If an app allows anonymous posting and is used in schools, chances are some teens will abuse it.

What to do: Ask around and pay attention to what parents, teachers, and other kids say about it to get a sense if it's stirring up trouble. Make sure your teen understands how to report and block other users, and check the school's policy about cyberbullying.
Negative Effects: Social Media and Its Ties to Suicide

A study was completed in response to the rising number of suicide deaths because of cyberbullying. It found that, while its a difficult subject to study ("only" one million people worldwide commit suicide), there are several consequences when it comes to Internet use and increased suicide rates:

- Cyberbullying has been tied to increased suicide risks, particularly among teenagers (and you thought high school was bad)
- Social media helps form suicide pacts among complete strangers with only this one thing in common
- There is information on “how-to” methods for committing suicide
- Video sites, such as YouTube, are increasingly playing a role in providing pro-suicide and self-harm content.

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Children and juveniles who exhibit signs of being bullied are at greater risk of being suicidal when social media is involved.

Additionally, methods of suicide are available through the same sources of social media.
Signs of Unhealthy Social Networking

While young people are more likely to suffer mental health issues from social networking, anyone of any age may be affected negatively, particularly those adults who are prone to addictive behavior.

Everyone should understand the signs of an unhealthy social networking situation and watch for the following signs:

Focusing problems – easily distracted and loss of ability to concentrate.

Lack of concern about one-on-one relationships – prioritizing social networking over face to face family and friend relationships.

Lessening communication skills – talking less, difficulty articulating thoughts into words, inattentive when others are speaking.

Unconcerned about obligations in the “real” world – more interested in checking status updates and communicating on the internet than participating in activities off of the computer.

Withdrawal symptoms (agitation, fidgeting, aggressiveness, etc.) when unable to participate in social networking for a period of time.
Addiction Disorder

Facebook Addiction Disorder — When people are afraid to disconnect from social media services because they think they’re going to be missing something important. The disorder, which is not a clinical diagnosis and is not yet recognized by the broader medical community, is attracting attention. Recent research has found that Facebook and social media websites may be as addictive as alcohol or cigarettes.

Withdrawals

In a study from the University of Maryland, students were asked to go without social media for 24 hours. The study showed students had withdrawal symptoms, such as anxiety, misery, and being jittery.

These symptoms are also common in people recovering from drug and alcohol addiction.
Awareness

Being a part of the social media revolution requires personal education and responsibility of the hazards.

Parents should become familiar with the warning signs of the negative impacts to their children.

Parents as Role Models

Parents aren’t necessarily being good role models. A British study showed that while:

6 in 10 parents worried that their children spend too much time in front of a screen,
7 in 10 children worry that their parents are the ones who are plugged in and tuned out.
What Can Parents Do?

- Limit screen time access and have set rules for use of electronics
- Remove screens from the bedroom at night, including cell phones, tablets, and TVs
- Encourage daily interactions without electronic devices, i.e. family dinner at the table
- For younger children, monitor internet use and use parental controls
- Talk with your kids about the dangers and consequences of social media
- Keep computer in a common area in the home
- Set an age limit for social media use (i.e. 13 years of age)

AAP Recommendations for Parents:

Policy Statement

_children, adolescents, and the media_
Strasburger and Hogan, 2013

Parents can model effective “media diets” to help their children learn to be selective and healthy in what they consume. Take an active role in children’s media education by co-viewing programs with them and discussing values.

Make a media use plan, including mealtime and bedtime curfews for media devices. Screens should be kept out of kids’ bedrooms.

Limit entertainment screen time to less than one or two hours per day; in children under 2, discourage screen media exposure.
13 Reasons Why

- Season 2 was released on May 18th, 2018
- Prominent themes relate to suicide, school shootings, sexual trauma, physical violence, substance use, and bullying

13 Reasons Why: Toolkit for Clinicians provides practical advice and resources to help clinicians respond appropriately

What Can Clinicians Do?
- Provide guidance on viewing
- Guide thoughtful journalism
- Promote help-seeking behaviors
- Support for youth at risk

Resources

- AAP New Guidelines, November 2016:
  - “Children, Adolescents, and the Media” includes the:
    - Healthy Family Media Use Plan
      - www.HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan
AAP Recommendations for Pediatricians

Policy Statement
Children, Adolescents, and the Media
Strasburger and Hogan, 2016

Pediatricians should ask two questions at the well-child visit:
1) How much time is the child spending with media?
2) Is there a television and/or Internet-connected device in the child’s bedroom?

• Take a more detailed media history with children or teens at risk for obesity, aggression, tobacco or substance use, or school problems.

• Promote adherence to guidelines for adequate physical activity and sleep.

• Work with schools to encourage media education; encourage innovative use of technology to help students learn; and to have rules about what content may be accessed on devices in the classroom.

• As the media landscape continues to evolve at a rapid pace, the AAP calls for an ongoing mechanism to fund research about media’s effects on youth.

What Can Pediatricians Do?
Talking to Families about Social Media Use

Children and Adolescents and Digital Media
Chassiakos et al, 2016

• Pediatricians can be helpful resources for families seeking advice about how to develop and individualize family rules & guidelines to meet their needs.

• Unfortunately, only 16% of pediatricians ask families about their media use.

• In addition, only 29% of parents report relying on their pediatrician for advice about broadcast and social media, although those who do tend to follow AAP recommendations.

Schmidt, 2012
Screening

Based on discussions with parents and/or adolescents, consider screening for problematic Internet use and Internet gaming disorder.

Validated tools include:

- The Internet Gaming Disorder Scale
- Problematic and Risky Internet Use Screening Scale (PRIUSS)
- Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale (BFAS)

Chassiakos et al, 2016

- Award-winning documentary exploring the effects on the brain of teenagers.
- Created by pediatrician and mother, Dr. Delaney Ruston
- Explores social media in family life, including the director’s own, depicts messy struggles over social media, video games, academics and internet addiction
- Insights from authors and brain scientists
- Offers solutions on how we can empower kids to best navigate the digital world.
Referring to the Hub: After required routine screening and/or based on clinical judgement following the exam, providers can fax the PPC Hub. Providers should send a complete referral form, screening tools, and any other clinically relevant information.

What Does the Hub Staff Need? All of the information the PPC Hub staff needs is on the referral form, including relevant background information, current clinical picture, demographic information, and reason for referral. Some providers may choose to send notes from previous visits as well, which can be very helpful, but is not required.

Communicating with the Family: Please be sure you have discussed the PPC Hub with the patient and family prior to faxing a referral to the PPC Hub, so that the family is aware that a Hub staff psychologist/LCSW/other mental health specialist will be contacting them to discuss current concerns and suggestions for support/treatment.
Collaborative Hub Procedure Cont’d

What will the PPC Hub Staff Do? Hub staff will call the patient’s family and complete a clinical intake. The family will discuss their main concerns. Case managers will evaluate for severity and level of care. Depending on the patient’s needs, Hub staff will:

- **Recommend** an appropriate level of care (inpatient, PHP, IOP, or outpatient) - the family is sent a list of referrals for therapy services to address current mental health concerns.
- Match the patient with a therapist based on their insurance and geographical location – the referrals are researched by staff psychologists/LCSWs, and most often accept patient insurance.

“Closing” the Loop: Hub staff will communicate with you, sending you notes on what occurred with the family. They will also encourage the family to call them back if they need another resource. Hub staff will also follow-up with referred families 3 and 9 months after initial referral.

Additional Resources

- Two-sided handout that provides guidance on healthy media use to families with children from 18 months to 18 years of age.
- 8-page informational guide on social media and children’s mental and physical health.
- Poster for use in exam or waiting rooms.
Final Remarks

Considering the negative effects of social media, ask yourself these questions again:
1. WHAT is this new dynamic doing to normal social interaction?
2. What impact do these social networks have on their user’s mental health?

As we embark on this new social media revolution let us be mindful of the significant negative effects that come along with it, and use our role as pediatric providers to promote strategies for our patients and their families for more meaningful use as well as abstinence, for more positive mental health.

Thank you!

QUESTIONS?