

SOCIAL MEDIA USE, SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION, AND DEPRESSION AMONG U.S. YOUNG ADULTS

ARIEL SHENSA, M.A. NICHOLAS D. BOWMAN, PH.D. JAIME E. SIDANI, M.P.H., PH.D.
MICHAEL P. MARSHAL, PH.D. BRIAN A. PRIMACK, M.D., PH.D.



CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON
MEDIA | TECHNOLOGY | HEALTH

INTRODUCTION

- Prior research suggests increased social media use (SMU) is associated with depression
- Social media addiction (SMA) is characterized similar to other behavioral addictions
- This link between SMU and depression may be partially explained by SMA

METHODS

- Nationally-representative sample of 1763 adults ages 19-32
- SMU measured as (1) total time spent per day and (2) frequency of site visits
- SMA assessment adapted from the validated Bergen Facebook Addiction Scale
- Depression measured with the 4-item PROMIS short form
- We used mediation analysis to examine the effects of SMU on depression, mediated by SMA, while controlling for 7 socio-demographic covariates

RESULTS

- Median SMU was 61 (IQR 30-135) minutes per day and 30 (IQR 9-57) site visits per week
- Both time and frequency were strongly associated with SMA, which was strongly associated with depression
- Direct effects of SMU on depression were substantially weaker
- 71% of the effect of time and 74% of the effect of frequency on depression was mediated by SMA

DISCUSSION

- It may be valuable for interventions to focus on signs/symptoms of SMA instead of only targeting total SMU
- Longitudinal research is needed to establish directionality
- Qualitative research may help understand reasons for these associations

