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