

# Social Media Use and Negative Health Impacts

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Social media are websites and applications which enable users to participate in social networking. These websites and applications focus on communication, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn are some of the popular examples of general social networking sites. People use these sites to stay in touch and interact with friends and family. [5] To date, there are already 2.95 billion members globally who use social media and the most widely used social networking platform worldwide is Facebook.[9]

The emergence of social media has completely changed how we engage and communicate with one another. While social media offers many advantages, such as allowing us to stay in touch with friends and family, excessive use of it can be harmful to our physical as well as mental well-being.

Social media can also encourage inactivity and sedentary behaviour. Hours are frequently spent in front of devices reading through feeds and connecting with the online world. This inactivity can result in weight gain, muscle wasting, and other sedentary lifestyle-related health issues.

Earlier on, the potentially addictive quality of social media was anticipated by different newspapers. [2, 3] There were even predictions by the media that women could be at greater risk for developing such addictions. [4] The persistent demand for praise and affirmation from others can cause addiction-like behaviour. Excessive use of social networking sites has even led to dismissal from a job which is a serious issue. [10]

With the advancement of social media, there are emerging potential new mental health problems. [1] These emerging health problems could be raising stress and anxiety levels. Continual exposure to unfavourable news and social comparison on social media can cause feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. Additionally, the tension and anxiety of people might be increased by the need to maintain an engaging and active social media presence.

Social media also has the potential to interfere with sleep cycles. Before going to bed, a lot of people spend hours looking through their social media accounts, which might disrupt their sleep. [11] Electronic device blue light can also interfere with the body's natural sleep cycle, making it more difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep.

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With the rapid expansion in the use of social media, comes the problem of cyberbullying and harassment. These can add to the mental health problems like depression and anxiety. In conclusion, excessive usage of social media has a detrimental effect on human health. It's critical to use social media sparingly and to be conscious of any potential harm it may do to our physical and mental health.

Facebook use has been linked to a greater degree of negative social comparison.[7] Such comparison is harmful to one's self-perception and self-esteem [6][7][8]

It's high time that we go for judicious use of social networking software and find an optimal level of social media use that is advantageous to several health behaviours.

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