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Exploring the impact of social media on college student mental health and well-being

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Introduction: The increase of complex mental health issues is emerging as an immediate concern around the world. Over 1.1 billion people worldwide experience mental illness or a mental health disability, and one in four people are affected by various mental health challenges. Research shows an increase in major depressive episodes among adolescents from 8.7% in 2005 to 11.3% in 2014, and from 8.8% to 9.6% among young adults. This subset of the population is

representative of many college students, positioning mental health as a major concern for universities. At the same time, society is facing an outstanding advancement of mobile technology and social media, and corporations can take advantage of particular social marketing strategies in order to maximize their quantity, quality, and usage among teens and young adults. Objective: This review aims to analyze and summarize the literature on the impact of social media on mental health, and consider the wellbeing measures of depression, anxiety, stress, and loneliness.

Methods: A systematic literature search was performed using different databases, including PubMed/Medline, PMC, Science Direct/Elsevier, EMBASE, with inclusion criteria of papers

published after 2015.

Results: From our review, we found a positive correlation between social media use and the presence of mental health challenges, as well as a positive correlation between social media networking and higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among teens. The literature demonstrates that social networking behaviors may result in decreased loneliness.

Conclusion: Our review revealed inconsistent findings regarding social media use and the wellbeing measures of depression, anxiety, stress, and loneliness. The evidence supports a correlation between social media use and wellbeing measures, which validates the importance of the topic.

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