

## **The influence of social media on the incidence of depression anxiety and psychological distress in adolescents aged 13-18: A systematic review**

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Social media has become inextricable to our daily lives. However, social media are blamed for an increase in mental health problems in the current generation of children and adolescents.

**Objective:** The purpose of this paper is to review and evaluate the impact of social media on the incidence of depression, anxiety

and psychological distress in adolescents. A systematic search of a multi-database including PsycINFO, Medline, Embase, CINAHL and SSC was undertaken. Eligible studies were reviewed with the NIH quality assessment tool for observational cohort and cross-sectional studies, followed by narrative synthesis. Thirteen studies were eligible for inclusion. Critical appraisal revealed poor to fair quality in included studies regarding their methods, design and sampling. Results of studies were classified into four domains of exposure to social media: time spent, activity, investment and addiction. The evidence showed that all domains were correlated with depression, anxiety

and psychological distress in adolescents. Some studies found that insomnia and rumination mediated the relationship between social media addiction and depression. Overall, this review found indicative evidence that social media use related to the increased risk of depression, anxiety and psychological distress, although there are considerable caveats due to the methodological limitations of cross-sectional studies and use of self-report questionnaires. Underlying mechanisms in this putative causal relationship should be explored in future research, with longitudinal studies to measure the longer-term effects of social media on mental health.