



Digital Dependence: Exploring the Link between Social Media Overuse and Anxiety Disorders in Adolescents

Ling Tong*

Zhejiang University School of Medicine Sir Run Run Shaw Hospital, Hangzhou, China

Keywords: Digital dependence; Social media overuse; Anxiety disorders; Adolescents; Mental health; Online behavior; Psychological impact; Digital addiction; Emotional well-being; Youth mental health; Technology use

Introduction

The rapid expansion of digital technologies and social media platforms has transformed the way adolescents interact, learn, and perceive the world around them [1]. While these tools offer opportunities for connection and information-sharing, excessive and uncontrolled use often termed digital dependence has emerged as a growing public health concern. Recent evidence suggests a troubling link between social media overuse and the development of anxiety disorders among adolescents, who may be particularly vulnerable to the emotional pressures and social comparisons facilitated by online environments [2]. This study seeks to explore the relationship between digital dependence and anxiety symptoms in adolescents, aiming to better understand the psychological impact of constant connectivity. By identifying these associations, we hope to inform interventions that support healthier digital habits and promote mental well-being in this critical developmental stage [3].

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a significant association between social media overuse and elevated levels of anxiety among adolescents [4]. These results are consistent with a growing body of literature suggesting that frequent engagement with social media platforms may intensify feelings of worry, fear of missing out (FOMO), social comparison, and emotional dysregulation. Adolescents, whose emotional and cognitive regulation systems are still developing, appear particularly vulnerable to the pressures and overstimulation that constant digital connectivity can create. Several mechanisms may explain this link [5]. First, the curated and idealized portrayals commonly seen on social media may foster unrealistic expectations and negative self-perception, contributing to heightened anxiety. Second, the compulsive need to stay updated and respond to notifications can disrupt daily routines, sleep patterns, and face-to-face interactions, all of which are critical for emotional stability during adolescence. Furthermore, the possibility of cyber bullying, online harassment, and exposure to distressing content may further exacerbate anxiety symptoms [6].

Despite these concerning findings, it is important to recognize the complex role social media plays in adolescents' lives it can also offer social support, opportunities for identity exploration, and a sense of community [7]. Therefore, interventions should not necessarily advocate for complete abstinence but rather promote mindful, balanced, and purposeful use of digital platforms [8]. This study's cross-sectional design limits causal inferences; we cannot determine whether social media overuse leads to anxiety or if adolescents with pre-existing anxiety are more prone to excessive online engagement [9]. Future longitudinal research is needed to untangle these relationships and to examine protective factors that may mitigate risks, such as digital literacy education, parental guidance, and self-regulation skills.

Overall, the results emphasize the urgent need for parents, educators, and policymakers to address digital dependence among adolescents by fostering healthier online habits and providing mental health support tailored to the digital age [10].

Conclusion

This study highlights a clear and concerning link between social media overuse and the presence of anxiety disorders among adolescents. As digital dependence becomes increasingly common in this age group, the psychological risks associated with excessive online engagement cannot be overlooked. Our findings underscore the importance of promoting balanced digital habits and enhancing awareness of the mental health impacts of constant connectivity. Efforts to educate adolescents, parents, and educators about mindful social media use, along with early intervention strategies, are essential to safeguarding emotional well-being. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies to better understand causality and explore targeted interventions that can effectively support adolescents navigating the challenges of the digital world.

References

- Strang J, Kelleher M, Best D, Mayet S, Manning V (2006) Emergency naloxone for heroin overdose should it available over the counter?. *Bio Med J* 333: 614-615.
- Alcorn T (2014) American embraces treatment for opioid drug overdose. *Lancet* 383: 1957-1958.
- Sporer KA, Kral AH (2007) Prescription naloxone: a novel approach to heroin over-dose prevention. *Ann Emerg Med* 49: 172-177.
- Doyon S, Aks SE, Schaeffer S (2014) Expanding access to naloxone in the United States. *American journal of clinical toxicology. Clin Toxicol (Phil)* 52: 989-992.
- OSF (2013) Widening the Net of Naloxone Prescribers-Standing order model.
- Tobin KE, Davey MA, Latkin CA (2005) Calling emergency medical services during drug overdose: an examination of individual, social and setting correlates. *Addiction* 100: 397-404.
- Darke S, Ross J, Hall W (1996) Overdose among heroin users in Sydney, Australia: II. Responses to overdose. *Addiction* 91: 413-417.
- Lagu T, Anderson BJ, Stein M (2006) Overdoses among friends: Drug users are willing to administer naloxone to others. *J Subst Abuse Treat* 30:129-133.

*Corresponding author: Ling Tong, Zhejiang University School of Medicine Sir Run Run Shaw Hospital, Hangzhou, China, E-mail: lingtong23@gmail.com

Received: 03-Mar-2025, Manuscript No: jart-25-165040, **Editor Assigned:** 06-Mar-2025, Pre QC No: jart-25-165040 (PQ), **Reviewed:** 17-Mar-2025, QC No: jart-25-165040, **Revised:** 24-Mar-2025, Manuscript No: jart-25-165040 (R), **Published:** 31-Mar-2025, DOI: 10.4172/2155-6105.1000758

Citation: Ling T (2025) Digital Dependence: Exploring the Link between Social Media Overuse and Anxiety Disorders in Adolescents. *J Addict Res Ther* 16: 758.

Copyright: © 2025 Ling T. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

9. Lenton SR, Hargreaves KM (2000) Should we conduct a trial of distributing naloxone to Heroin users for peer administration to prevent fatal overdose. *Med J Aust* 173: 260-263.
10. WHO (2014) Community Management of Opioid overdoses. USA.