

Delving Into the Effects of social media On Health: A Boon or Bane?

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Sir,

Social media platforms have experienced extraordinary global growth in popularity in recent decades, radically altering how we interact with one another, share information, and communicate. Social media is functioning as the new valence for the foundation of our daily lives. With 4.9 billion users worldwide, social media usage has reached a new high. The average person uses social media for approximately 145 minutes each day, which is an immense amount of time.¹ While there is no doubt that these platforms have forged tighter ties between people, they have also given rise to questions about how they may affect other facets of society, including public health. This article delves into the multifaceted influence of social media on public health both positive and negative impacts.

Social media is a potent tool for health education and awareness spreading information about health issues and raising awareness campaigns. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram make it possible for healthcare groups to communicate vital information about illnesses, preventive measures, and healthy lifestyles with a larger audience. For people dealing with particular health issues, social media platforms offer a sense of community. People can interact, share experiences, and ask for assistance through support groups and online communities,

which promotes emotional health and minimizes feelings of loneliness. Public health efforts, including those to stop smoking and promote vaccinations, make efficient use of social media to interact with the public. These initiatives gather speed quickly thanks to social media's viral nature, which raises awareness and involvement.²

Let's not forget the harmful impacts of social media. Excessive use of social media has been linked to mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and feelings of inadequacy. The constant exposure to curated, idealized lifestyles can create unrealistic expectations, leading to a negative impact on self-esteem and mental well-being. Social media platforms are notorious for the rapid spread of misinformation, especially concerning health-related topics. False or misleading information about treatments, diets, and diseases can misguide the public, leading to dangerous consequences like self-diagnosis and self-medication.

An important role of social media during Covid 19 can be reflected. When contrasting previous pandemics with COVID-19, one distinguishing factor is the vital role that internet platforms play in spreading information, such as treatment regimens and preventative strategies, thereby linking the quarantined people across dispersed geographies. However, in this day of information overload when people are

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sharing photos, videos, and texts across a variety of platforms and devices, social media has developed into a bigger vehicle for exaggeration, propaganda, and deceit, which frequently creates societal unrest and anxiety.³

The impact of social media on public health is a complicated interplay of admirable efforts and unsettling difficulties. Although technology presents unprecedented chances for health awareness and education, it is impossible to ignore the rapid propagation of false information and its repercussions on mental health. Society could take full advantage of social media's benefits while reducing its detrimental effects by cultivating digital literacy, responsible platform regulation, and mental health support, promising a healthier digital future for all.

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