Problematic Social Media Use: Results from a Large-Scale Nationally Representative Adolescent Sample

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Risks and harms

## Sample

5961 Hungarian students from 9th and 10th grade (Part of the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs)

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Stepping up awareness and empowerment

# Abstract

Despite social media use being one of the most popular activities among adolescents, prevalence estimates among teenage samples of social media (problematic) use are lacking in the field. The present study surveyed a nationally representative Hungarian sample comprising 5,961 adolescents as part of the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD). Using the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) and based on latent profile analysis, 4.5% of the adolescents belonged to the at-risk group, and reported low self-esteem, high level of depression symptoms, and elevated social media use. Results also demonstrated that BSMAS has appropriate psychometric properties. It is concluded that adolescents at-risk of problematic social media use should be targeted by school-based prevention and intervention programs.

# Outcome

The study used the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale (BSMAS) to measure problematic social media usage and found that this instrument is "a psychometrically valid scale that is an appropriate tool to identify the signs of risky social media use among adolescents". According to the findings 4.5% of participants could have been classified as being at-risk. Those who were identified as at risk showed the lowest self-esteem and the highest level of depressive symptoms and the most time spent on internet and social media use. Also, adolescents that were at risk of social media use were mainly female, and reported the greatest amount of internet and social media usage.