Family environment and problematic internet use among adolescents: The mediating roles of depression and Fear of Missing Out

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## Sample

The sample consisted of 85 adolescents and their parents (one parent for each adolescent), yielding a total sample size of 170 participants. 59% of the adolescents were male, with ages ranging between 12 and 16
(M ¼ 14.04, SD ¼ 1.09). Most parents were married (75%), with formal academic education (78%). Parents’ age ranged between 33 and 52 (M ¼ 42.66, SD ¼ 4.16).

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

# Abstract

A family environment, characterized by low expressiveness, low cohesion and intense conflicts is usually associated with problematic internet use (PIU) among adolescents. However, the mechanism that correlates family environment with PIU is still unclear. We propose that a negative family environment is associated with high adolescents’ depression which, in turn, leads to Fear of Missing Out (FoMO); Finally, FoMO is associated with PIU, and time spent online. Eighty-five adolescents (aged 12–16) and their parents (total N ¼ 170) participated in the study. Parents provided data on the family environment, and adolescents provided data on depression, FoMO and PIU. In addition, we monitored adolescents’ smartphones for 14 days, gathering objective data to evaluate time and content online. Results supported out model, indicating that the effects of low family expressiveness and high conflicts on PIU and time spent online are mediated by depression and FoMO. Results suggest that positive family environment could decrease depressive symptoms and FoMO among adolescents, and hence, diminish PIU and time spent online.

# Outcome

Sela et al. (2020) found that a positive parent-adolescent relationship decreases depressive symptoms in adolescents. These results emphasize the importance of parents helping their children to develop coping strategies and problem-solving techniques during the adolescence period. findings support the notion that a family’s lack of support predicts adolescents’ depression and not vice versa. The results also emphasize the role of FoMO in linking depression and PIU. Specifically, we suggest that depressed adolescents who do not enjoy family support might feel emotionally rejected, and thus, try to seek self-affirmation from others, as expressed by high Fomo.