Use of social media and autistic traits in adolescents diagnosed with major depressive disorder

# Details

## Year

2020

## DOI

10.5455/apd.94769

## Issued

2020

## Language

English

## Volume

21

## Issue

6

## Start Page

## End Page

## Authors

Şahin B.;Usta M.

## Type

Journal article

## Journal

Anatolian Journal of Psychiatry

## Publisher

AVES Publishing Co.

## Topics

Internet usage, practices and engagement

## Sample

This study was designed to be a single-center, cross-sectional study. The patients included were those who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria who presented at the Pediatric and Ado-lescent Mental Health and Diseases Polyclinic of Giresun University Obstetrics and Pediatric Diseases Training and Research Hospital. The sample comprised 56 adolescent patients, aged 13-18 years, who were diagnosed with major depressive disorder (MDD) based on DSM-5. The adolescents included were newly diagnosed with MDD, had received no psychiatric treat-ment, and demonstrated normal intelligence performance.
The exclusion criteria were defined as any co-morbid ASD, psychotic disorder, bipolar disor-der, eating disorder, substance abuse, neurolo-gical disease, a history of trauma with more than one hour of loss of consciousness, the presence of any unstable or chronic medical disease, or any known sight or hearing defect.

# Abstract

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the relationship between social media use and smartphone use and autistic traits in adolescents diagnosed with major depressive disorder (MDD). Methods: Fifty-six adoles-cent patients diagnosed with MDD were included. The Autism Spectrum Questionnaire-Adolescent Version (ASQ-A), the Social Media Use Disorder Scale (SMDS), the Smartphone Addiction Scale-Short version (SAS-SV) the Children’s Depression Inventory, and Schedule for affective disorders and schizophrenia for school-age children-present and lifetime version-Turkish version were applied to the participants. Results: The mean total ASQ-A score was determined to be below the defined cutoff points. Adolescents diagnosed with depression with high autistic traits (AT) showed a significantly higher depression score than the low AT group. In the correlation analysis, a signi-ficant positive relationship was determined between the depression score and the SMDS score (r=0.301) and between the SMDS score and the SAS-SV score (r=0.603). In the correlation analysis of the ASQ-A and the SMDS subscales, a significant positive relationship was determined between social skills and persistence, social skills and escape, and communication and withdrawal. Conclusion: The current study results present a different perspective that the determination of autistic traits in the depressive disorder could be important in determining treatment strategies. When determining the treatment strategies for adolescents diagnosed with depressive disorder, it may be important to determine autistic traits and to strengthen and support these difficulties by providing psychosocial interventions to increase social skills and communication in the context of cognitive and behavioral interventions to replace social media use for the adolescents to feel better and avoid stressful situations and negative mental states. Further long-term studies could show whether autistic traits create vulnerability to depression.

# Outcome

The study sample comprised 56 patients aged 12-18 years, diagnosed with MDD, of whom 70% were female. These adolescents were diag-nosed with a mild level of depression, and the CDI scores (mean 20.2) reflected this clinical level. Although the ASQ-A total scores were below.
A moderate level positive relationship was deter-mined between the depression scores and autis-tic traits.
In the current study, a moder-ate level correlation was determined between the ASQ-A total score and the severity of de-pression in newly diagnosed depressive adoles-cents who had not received any treatment. When the subscores were examined, a significant posi-tive correlation was seen between the ASQ soci-al skills and communication scores and the CDI scores.,
Depressed adolescents in the high AT group were found to have significantly higher depression scores compared to the low AT group.
When social media use and smartphone use were examined in the current study, there was seen to be a high-level correlation, and as the smartphone use score was above the cutoff points, this was found to be consistent with smartphone addiction.
When the autistic trait and social media use subfactors were examined, a significant relation-ship was shown between persistence, escape, and withdrawal, which are among the SMDS subscales, and ASQ-A subscales. These findings demonstrate that as the social skills of depressive adolescents deteriorate, they use social media more often to avoid negative emo-tions, and then they generally feel worse with the increased use of social media. Adolescents who experience difficulty in communication skills stated that they tried to spend less time on social media but they were unsuccessful. When high AT and low AT groups were compared in terms of SMDS subscales, only the persistence sub-scale was found to be significantly higher in high AT depressed adolescents. However, no signifi-cant relationship was found between autistic traits and smartphone addiction.
(Şahin Usta, 2020, p.646)