Active and Passive Social Media Use and Symptoms of Anxiety and Depressed Mood Among Icelandic Adolescents

# Details

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## Sample

The sample consists of students, ages 14–16, in the 8th, 9th, and 10th grades of compulsory school, whose parents consented to their participation. Anonymous questionnaires were administered to all students present in class on the day of the survey. Teachers distributed the questionnaires, and students returned them sealed in blank envelopes upon completion. The data collection protocol has been described elsewhere. In total, 10,563 students completed the questionnaire, yielding an 84 percent response rate; 50.3 percent were girls.

# Abstract

Adolescent use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat has increased dramatically over the last decade and now pervades their everyday social lives. Active and passive social media use may impact emotional health differently, but little is known about whether and to what extent either type of social media use influences emotional distress among young people. We analyzed population survey data collected from Icelandic adolescents (N = 10,563) to document the prevalence of social media use and investigate the relationship of both active and passive social media use with self-reported symptoms of anxiety and depressed mood. A hierarchical linear regression model revealed that passive social media use was related to greater symptoms of anxiety and depressed mood among adolescents and active social media use was related to decreased symptoms of anxiety and depressed mood, even after controlling for time spent on social media. When adding known risk and protective factors, self-esteem, offline peer support, poor body image, and social comparison to the model, active use was not related to emotional distress; however, passive use was still related to adolescent symptoms of anxiety and depressed mood. The effect of social media on emotional distress differed by gender as time spent on social media had a stronger relationship with emotional distress among girls. In addition, passive use was more strongly related to symptoms of depressed mood among girls. Future research should include risk and protective factors as mediators of different types of social media use and adolescent emotional distress.

# Outcome

-84.7% of girls and 68.5% of boys use social media once ore more a day.
-Symptoms of anxiety and depressed mood were positively correlated with time on social media
-"Girls reported greater symptoms of anxiety and depressed mood, even when controlling for use as well as risk and protective factors" (Thorisdottir et al., 2019, p. 539)
-"Poor body image and social comparison correlated with greater symptoms of anxiety and depressed mood and self-esteem and offline peer support with fewer symptoms of anxiety and depressed mood" (Thorisdottir et al., 2019, p. 539)