

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MENTAL HEALTH AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

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Abstract: Social media has become an essential part of modern life, especially for young people. While it offers opportunities for communication and self-expression, it also raises serious concerns about mental health. This article analyzes the impact of social media on psychological well-being and discusses strategies to reduce its negative effects.

Introduction

In the last two decades, social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook have transformed the way people interact. Young users spend a significant amount of time online, which influences their emotions, behavior, and self-image. Researchers increasingly focus on the relationship between social media use and mental health outcomes.

Positive Effects of Social Media

Social media can support mental well-being in several ways. It allows young people to stay connected with friends and family, especially during periods of isolation. Online communities also provide emotional support for individuals who may feel lonely or misunderstood in real life. In addition, social media can be a platform for spreading awareness about mental health issues.

Negative Psychological Impacts

1. Anxiety and Depression

Excessive use of social media is associated with higher levels of anxiety and depression. Constant exposure to idealized images of others' lives may create feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem.

2. Cyberbullying

Online harassment is a growing problem. Victims of cyberbullying often experience stress, fear, and social withdrawal, which can seriously harm their mental health.

3. Sleep Disorders

Spending too much time on social media, especially at night, disrupts sleep patterns. Poor sleep quality is closely linked to emotional instability and reduced academic performance.

Preventive Measures and Solutions

To reduce the negative effects of social media, several actions can be taken:

Encouraging digital literacy and responsible online behavior.
Limiting daily screen time, especially before bedtime.
Promoting open communication between parents, teachers, and young people.
Developing stronger policies against online harassment and harmful content.
Educational institutions and governments play an important role in creating a safer digital environment.



Conclusion

Social media has a powerful influence on the mental health of young people. While it offers valuable social and educational benefits, its excessive and uncontrolled use can lead to serious psychological problems. A balanced and responsible approach to social media is essential to protect the well-being of future generations.

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